

**BOOKS BY
GEORGE BIDDLE**

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GREEN ISLAND

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ADOLPHE BORIE

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BOARDMAN ROBINSON

AN AMERICAN ARTIST'S STORY

An American Artist's Story

GEORGE BIDDLE



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FIRST EDITION

Published September 1939

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO HELENE SARDEAU

The author begs to acknowledge his indebtedness to *The Arts*, *Groton School Quarterly* and the *American Magazine of Art* for permission to include articles or parts of articles printed in these magazines and to *Arts and Decoration* for permission to print photographs which appeared in this magazine.

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Those Golden Days

1885-1898

*Quant' è bella giovinczza
Che si fugge tuttavia!
Chi vuol esser lieto, sia:
Di doman non c'è certezza.*

LORENZO DE' MEDICI

WHEN I was about four and a half years old and Francis three, we decided at the latter's instigation to kill the baby. A sequence of events led up to this resolution. Francis had stolen the baby's rubber doll. The doll was forcibly expropriated from Francis by Irish Mary and returned to the baby. Francis snatched the doll back and slugged the baby in the face with it. For this he was formally punished. We talked things over later and decided that the easiest way was to drop him out onto Spruce Street. We got the cradle as far as the third-floor window and were working on the latch when Irish Mary again intervened and we were spared a further humiliation.

From that day and for many years to come Francis and I grew up together. I was the more prudent, he the more lively of the two. I had greater scruples and he a swifter imagination. I think of myself as the balance wheel and of him as the accelerator of this two-cylindere combination. His ardor often led him into crooked paths and consequently he was spanked more often. Although I always followed, somewhat timidly perhaps, in his wake, I never seem to have been much punished. I was essentially

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good — too good, without any question. I was a little smug and a little priggish. I tried very hard to do the right thing, but until well on in life was never very successful. I wanted very much the approbation of older and successful people. Life for me was a contest rather than a holiday. I was earnest and mild and very forgiving. I had one other offensive trait. When I had done anything particularly aggravating and hazardous — like holding a giant firecracker between my teeth while Francis lit it — I always admitted that I was in the wrong if I really thought so. That was the Quaker in me.

I had one redeeming quality, a vast curiosity about life; and I was willing to try anything once, just for the experience.

At night I lay awake and watched lights dance and zigzag an established course across the nursery ceiling. They were reflected from the headlights of the horse cars as they jogged their way down Spruce Street.

In the spring I used to walk to Rittenhouse Square with Irish Mary. What trees grew along the way I cannot say, but they dropped long cattails of rotting flowers. I crushed them in my hands. They had a rank, fetid, pungent odor, which fifty years later I can still remember.

Once Irish Mary bought me a few cents' worth of tinware kitchen toys: little spoons, dishes, dessert molds. I can recall, too, the piercing shock of happiness I experienced in their possession.

One Easter I was driven to the Park where I met my cousin Philip. We both had Easter bunnies. I hated to leave the fields of waving grass and kept stroking the yellow dandelions.

When I was about four years old my father had rented a small house near Haverford College. On a June morning we three, Francis, Moncure and I, were taken out by Irish Mary and played all morning at prisoner's base in and out of the shrubbery. The lawn was carpeted with Quaker ladies. Eventually we were sum-

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moned back and asked if we cared to see the baby. I don't remember him so much, but my mother impressed me. She was lying all in white propped up on numberless pillows. The baby was somewhere beside her. I don't think we said anything but just stared at Mother.

Father had been ill and it was decided the following winter that he and my mother would go to Switzerland. White-haired Nana, who was the same age and height as Queen Victoria, and who had nursed my mother as a child, was to take Moncure and myself to winter in Atlantic City. Before that time I cannot particularly recall the turbulence of my older brother. Turbulent indeed is too temperate a word for him. He flashed through childhood like some tempestuous meteor, searing anything that crossed his path. He was vivid, black-haired, black-eyed, high-colored; seething with energy and deviltry. Passionate, emotional, warm in his affections and high-spirited, he had an ungovernable temper. One could not indeed envisage a probable career for him. One could have pictured him best in the role of a fifteenth-century condottiere. One could hardly foresee him as a successful investment banker and a leading authority on Philadelphia municipal bonds.

I was charmed and awed by his refractory and tumultuous violence, but my admiration was tempered with disapproval. I never wholeheartedly took part in his many acts of sedition but observed them with mingled dread and fascination.

I recall one particularly active morning when Nana, to ensure herself a little rest, had locked him in an upper bedroom which overlooked the boardwalk. Imprisoned in the bedroom Moncure, however, hardly wasted a moment. With a ball of knitting yarn he lowered from his window a small basket in which he proceeded to advertise, offer for sale and peddle with some success whatever belongings of Nana's he felt would most readily catch the eye and appeal to the appetite of the passersby. He had

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stripped the room bare of most of Nana's toilet articles before she was aware of the gathering crowd below his window.

In later years we used to recall his various exploits with successive nurses, governesses and tutors. He had locked the lantern-jawed and sad-eyed Henrietta, who taught us German, all morning in a linen closet. In Switzerland he had bought a small, savage mongrel which he kept on a leash and which at unexpected moments he would unloose upon Mademoiselle Schlumberger. Lastly there was that breathless occasion when Bonne Mama Biddle, who was extremely proud of her oldest grandson, was showing him off to a daughter-in-law who had presented her with only four granddaughters.

"Now your girls are all very backward, Minnie," she was saying. "Moncure, spell a really big word for your Aunt."

"A b — ab," shouted Moncure; "d o m e n — domen. There's your abdomen!" And he gave Bonne Mama a whack which delighted all of us.

When I was seven years old Father died. The Ardmore house on the edge of the Haverford College woods was closed and my mother moved over to live with Grandfather Robinson at Penllyn. Grandfather Robinson was at that time almost ninety. He could remember the War of 1812, and had graduated from William and Mary before the deaths of Thomas Jefferson and John Adams. Grandmother Robinson was a granddaughter of Edmund Randolph, Governor of Virginia and first Attorney General under Washington; and was consequently a cousin of President Jefferson and Robert E. Lee, both of whose mothers were Randolphs. My mother's family were tremendously proud of this connection. They considered themselves something like royalty and looked down on all Philadelphians as rather middle-class and stuffy. Of late years I have grown a little bored with my great-great-grandfather and learned recently with some pleasure from my friend Sam Morison, the historian, that he was ap-

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parently a rather shallow person, a little dishonorable in his petty financial dealings, but otherwise a charming and well-dressed fellow.

At a certain period of my childhood, however, I was much given to genealogical research, and derived, as a compensation for a somewhat puny physical frame and a lack of social poise, a sense of power from the thought that the blood of patriots and statesmen flowed through my veins. I learned, then, with some disgust that Edmund Randolph, who had been elected a member of the Constitutional Convention, had, for a certain bias, personal, political or otherwise, packed up his bags in Philadelphia and returned in a huff to Richmond without ever signing the Constitution! Petty, I called it. For some grudge he had let us all down, forever and ever. On my eighth birthday my mother presented me with a pair of cuff links which had belonged to him. She immediately took them back, however, as she feared I might lose them. Quite a hollow gesture, I felt. But I still have them.

As a very young man Grandfather Robinson had moved up from Richmond to Philadelphia. In 1829, at the age of twenty-seven, he had constructed the Pottsville and Danville — the first railroad in America. In 1834 he had surveyed and started building the Philadelphia and Reading; and two years later was sent to England to secure a loan for the completion of the road. He had in Paris presided at a dinner given to Lafayette by the American colony. As a child I saw and spoke to an old man who when he was still young had spoken and broken bread with an old man who was intimate with Washington and a contemporary of Jefferson's and who had played a not insignificant part in the American and French Revolutions.

I associate Grandfather Robinson with his cane and shaggy white eyebrows. He was led about by his private secretary for his eyes were failing him. He did not seem to me so much lacking in cordiality as curiously detached and above not only us boys, but life itself. He never offered us the choice between a nickel and

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a dime as did our jovial, kindly Grandfather Biddle. I could imagine intimacy with him as easily as intimacy with an ancient spruce tree. One conceived indeed of Grandfather Robinson in terms of mahogany furniture and cut-glass decanters, or of that peculiar odor of an old stone house whose shutters remain always closed to the heat and light of the shimmering Pennsylvania August weather. The more I think of him, indeed, the more he seems a completely disembodied and detached reflection of his own setting. And it is curious that I, who feel so deeply moved by, so loving and possessive of, that Penllyn background, should feel so little moved, so almost hostile to its most real and vital emanation. Later on I realized to what extent he had dominated — through no fault of his own but merely through the force of his personality — all those who sprang from his loins or suffered his impact for nearly a hundred years, for three full generations.

How could a boy not love the Penllyn farmhouse? Washington, it was told us, had spent the night there. Washington had tied his horse under the maple tree that shaded Grandmother Robinson's bedroom window. I saw the tree come down, trembling in safety well beyond the orbit of its power to strike and rend. All morning the men, Negroes and farm hands, had been at it below ground with the shovels and picks, wedging a great gap above the roots with their axes. Seven men, Negroes and farm hands, swayed on the ropes; and gradually the maple swayed, swayed with them, shuddered and came down to earth with a crash that sickened me.

That was annihilation, destruction, the severance of life from life, as I first encountered it.

That summer a Negro killed a snake in the field with his shovel. He slashed and ripped at the snake, which churned and slithered, headless, tailless, de-ossified, truncated, bleeding. The Negro turned to me, smiling: "Ole man snake won't die, though, till de sun goes down." That also I accepted. I too had seen death in the afternoon.

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The house itself had fine solid walls of Pennsylvania masonry, low-ceilinged, cool, white-plastered rooms within. The house nestled under shade maples and firs. A well-banked, shallow brook ran from the springhouse, parting in two the lawn and wandering off into the meadow. There were brick steps leading up to the house and a brick terrace in the rear. Here we lunched on hot summer days. Behind the house were the stables, barns, the colored farmer's cottage, the corncribs and the icehouse.

I stood once in the corncrib with old Ben, an ex-slave of Grandfather's. A rat jumped at him and Ben caught it by the tail and flung it out of the corncrib and the dogs got it. Down by the stables we watched John the Coachman curry the horses in the early morning. With his right hand he scraped and curried the big chestnut's belly, and with the other scratched, slapped and caressed the broad flat croup, blowing air through his teeth, talking to the chestnut. In the afternoon I went driving with Grandmother in the victoria, to the Blue Bell Inn, up the Old Morris Road, to Spring House or the Four Corners. I sat in front with John the Coachman. The chestnuts' quarters were in a lather of white spume. Periodically they would raise their tails and slowly squeeze out the droppings which fell to the breechings and burst into seed on their hocks. John the Coachman talked to the horses through these operations, urging them with a flick of the whip or a shake of the rein, as if to encourage them in the parturition.

Near the railroad track was a squalid settlement of Negro shacks — chickens, goats, cart wheels, clothes lines, privies and children. We chummed with some of the kids and they invited us to a baptism. We drove over to the Wissahickon at Fort Washington. A black girl was screaming and leaping about, up to her waist in the muddy water. Every time she got well out she was shoved down again by the other Negroes, screaming and singing.

One day I climbed to the attic of Grandfather's house. It

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was the twenty-third of January, 1893, because the next day was my eighth birthday. From the heat and old trunks and dust I found myself in the tank room, cool and mysterious with the sweating, gurgling water tanks crowded high about me. I heard water running but the top of the tanks was above my eye level. I managed to chin myself and looked down over the edge into one of them. As fast as the water ran in through one pipe it ran out through another vent in the far side. I was fascinated by the dripping tank walls, the pipes and the noise of the water. I seem to have had a corncob with me and I stuffed it securely into the outgoing vent. I had no definite plan or expectation. I acted on the spur of the moment just to see what would happen. Eventually I wandered off in search of further afternoon distractions. The effects of my experimentation were appalling. It was only the next morning that it became evident to what extent the dining room and kitchen were flooded. Grandfather's and Grandmother's bedrooms had absorbed the first impact, but as they had both left the country for the town house, this upper infiltration was not immediately noticed. As a punishment I spent my eighth birthday in bed and was not allowed to see anyone.

I do not recall my mother as being particularly angry. In such situations she concentrated her entire attention in an effort to measure out the strictest discipline, tempered with impartiality rather than mercy. There seemed no room left for any other emotion. On other occasions, however, for what seemed to me no adequate reason, she would explode into the most violent fits of anger. Her mere expression at such moments always shocked me. Francis and Moncure would lose their tempers, too, and scream and stamp in rage. I couldn't. This display of feeling was repugnant to me, undignified and ill-bred. I waited in silence until it was over or I could get away. Until the very end I could never fathom the wellsprings of my mother's emotions. We discussed her together at length as if she were an intricate problem

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in chess; but no one of us — or anyone else — ever had the satisfaction of really understanding her; of plumbing, of cataloguing, of pigeonholing and rationalizing the currents and crosscurrents of her nature.

The cause of one of these explosions, over which I pondered for years, was that I gave her for a Christmas present a very expensive aquatinted dry point by my beloved Mary Cassatt. At another time she would not speak to me for days — it soured an entire Easter holiday — because I bought her an equally expensive print by my immortal Hokusai, this time for her birthday. I could never seemingly observe any relation of cause and effect between my acts or omissions to act and what we used to describe as my mother's "nerves." My brother Geoff recalls a meeting in a hotel on the Grand Canal at Venice. We two had been on a week's walking trip about the lakes and hill towns of Lombardy. My mother had been waiting for us alone in one of her rare moods of through-shining romantic affection. And this I shattered at a blow by asking her after a week's absence, before indeed she had had time to be kissed, which way it was to the water closet.

Once — I was perhaps eight or nine — my mother had taken me to town and in the confusion on Chestnut Street I seized her arm somewhat roughly as she did not seem aware of an approaching hansom cab. When we crossed the street I noticed that her cheeks were wet and she seemed from some remark she made to love me. For many years I wondered why. Poor Mother! She was in need of so vast a quantity of something which she seemed unable to educate her sons to give her.

Shortly after my eighth birthday my mother took us abroad and settled us for fifteen months at the Pension Sillig at Vevey on the Lake of Geneva. We had crossed on a North German Lloyd boat. I remember the sailors hoisting a shift of mainsail, probably to steady the keel. Traveling through Switzerland in a second-class coach I saw the fields of bright poppies waving under

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the snow-capped mountains; but even more vividly do I recall a terrible scene enacted between Moncure and a very British tutor which my mother must have annexed in Paris. The tutor started the trouble by forbidding Moncure to swallow the entire contents of a large bottle of sweet pickled walnuts. Moncure said to go to hell in so many different ways that even the Swiss passengers pricked up their ears. The tutor said in an awfully dignified, English-public-school sort of way for Moncure to come to his chambers later when we reached our hotel and he would give him a caning. Moncure spat the walnuts in his face and all over him. The tutor seized Moncure by the wrists and said he would hold him until the little American bouncer came to his senses. Moncure could take this from no man. He bit the tutor till he let go and then raked him fore and aft with his fingernails. I have forgotten who had the best of that particular skirmish. The tutor only lasted ten days and then returned to England, unshaken in his opinion of little American bouncers.

At Berne all three of us went to visit the famous bear pits. Dressed in blue serge blouses with cotton collars, black silk scarfs and new straw hats, we stood on either side of my mother, tightly clasping her hands and looking down at the bears. Whether it blew off or whether he threw it in is of little consequence, but before we knew it Moncure's new straw hat was in the center of the pit, with the bears sitting rather nervously in a ring about it. My mother called to a guard and offering him a franc asked him to retrieve it for her. He looked at her and then looked down at the bear pit. He called over to another guard and passed him the franc and said: "Go get the straw hat in the bear pit for the lady." My mother picked him up rather sharply, saying in her not smooth but forceful German that where she came from men were men, and please to keep a civil tongue in your head. By this time we had a dozen guards and many others about us all guffawing in the loudest manner. My mother was tremendously excited. Her lip curled in scorn; her

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eye flashed with anger. I maneuvered her smoothly but rapidly away from this scene of humiliation, for by now the new straw hat was in shreds and the bears were romping about with the debris. She jerked her arms in irritation, occasionally pausing to shout back that they were ill-bred fellows.

Francis and I ran away and climbed all day through the hills and the cobbled villages above Vevey. We bought sour white wine, black bread and cheese for lunch. There were purple gentians in the fields and the sound of cowbells coming down from the mountains. It was the happiest day we had ever had together.

When we returned to Ardmore, Moncure and I were sent to Haverford School. I was nearly eight. They called us both "Frenchy." We resented it and there were some stiff fights.

One summer we were sent with a tutor for a few weeks to Canada. We were to camp out, cook our own food and learn how to hunt and fish. We got plenty of trout and bass and Moncure and the tutor shot some sandpipers on the edge of the lake, but big game seemed pretty scarce. Moncure always carried the gun. It seemed fair that he should get the first shot if any game were seen, even a fox or a woodchuck. A day or two before we left a shell jammed and the only way to dislodge it was to fire off the shotgun. I was allowed to do this — successfully — at a chipmunk. I was tremendously proud and happy and skinned and cured my game that evening. Home at Ardmore I stuffed and mounted it. I already had a mounted mole and several small songbirds, a white-eyed vireo and a chippy sparrow. I made such a realistic job of the chipmunk that our cat mistook it for live game and mangled it badly. One paw was gone and the lower jawbone. By an extremely delicate operation I grafted one of the mole's paws and part of its face on to the chipmunk. A few weeks later Mrs. Gillespie, a granddaughter of Benjamin Frank-

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lin, was visiting my mother. I always considered her a badly-dressed and ugly old woman, although she had the reputation of a great lady, a sharp tongue, a scholar of the humanities; and was over eighty.

Talk drifted to Canada and Mrs. Gillespie asked me very graciously what luck I had had hunting and fishing.

"Not so bad," I said. "As a matter of fact I got a chipmunk."

"Well," she sniffed, "you need hardly have left the Haverford woods, or your own back porch for that matter."

From then on for a few years life seems to have been a series of shocks and adventures. I may as well mention a few of them. They served no educational purpose — either for myself or for my mother. They would seem to indicate the difficulties that even a well-meaning and earnest child under the most favorable circumstances may have in adjusting himself to his physical environment.

I had always wanted a Swedish knife. They were popular in those days. The knife is bodily removed from the handle, which looks like a hollow cigar, open at either end. The blade is unlocked and then thrust back through the handle. By means of some gadget the blade is held firmly in place and can only be released by pressing a concealed spring. In moments of ignorance or indecision in matters strictly masculine, my mother would always consult Uncle Charley Chauncey, who had sabred a rebel cavalryman in the Civil War, or Uncle Harry Boyer, who had shot buffalo in Wyoming. She wanted us to grow up just like other boys, as long as our possessions were not too great a risk to the rest of the household. She accordingly bought on approval a Swedish knife with a three-inch blade and carried it out to Penllyn, for Uncle Harry's inspection and advice. Uncle Harry pronounced it a very safe and prudent investment, since the blade would not snap down and cut off my fingers.

In the train back from Penllyn, curiosity got the better of my

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mother. She took the Swedish knife out of its smart leather case and opened it without any difficulty. She could not, however, locate the spring to close it, and traveled all day with the open blade and a French novel concealed in her muff. She turned it over to me at once and for a week I did nothing but sharpen it.

I have no explanation of the sequel.

Charles the Coachman was a tiny fellow, not five feet high. I was devoted to him. I used to help him harness Dandy the pony, when he drove down to Ardmore in the little dogcart for the marketing. That morning I stood about watching him adjust the check-straps. I made passes in the air with my Swedish knife. Charles unlooped the reins, hanging from the snaffle, leading them through the terret rings on the saddle. I climbed in ahead and he passed me up the reins. As he jumped in after me I held the knife point up on his seat and said: "Sit, Charles, sit." He was a gentle little fellow and forebearing. "Stop your fooling, George," he said, and brushing aside the knife, started to sit down. I was too quick for him and got it back point up and he sat on it. I don't know which of us was the more distracted. Perhaps he did not realize what had happened for he started to whip up Dandy, then jerked her head round again into the stable. He ran for the water trough bleeding terribly. His idea was to squat over it until he would stop bleeding. In a moment the water trough seemed full of blood. Blood was everywhere. Charles ran up from the stable to the kitchen. I was too frightened to follow him in. I wandered round and round the house, with the Swedish knife in my hand. I traced Charles's bloody trail over the cement area which separated the stable from the kitchen. I went in. They had him lying on his face on the kitchen table. They had his trousers off and were pouring flour over his buttocks from the flour barrel.

But everything turned out pretty well. There was no telephone and I drove down with Dandy and got hold of Dr. Gerhard. He sewed Charles up and had him moved from his room over the

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stable to a room on the third floor. It must have been in June because I remember bringing him up raspberries every evening from our garden.

I was allowed to keep the Swedish knife but later on that summer up at York Harbor I got remorse and threw it into the river.

Generally speaking, we were nice, well-brought-up kids. Not ornery or quarrelsome. Once in an argument over a game of cricket Francis kicked me in the groin and I was in bed for a week with a swollen testicle. Another time in a croquet match Moncure hit Philip over the head with a croquet mallet. Phil was younger but big and bony and he knocked Moncure down. Moncure lost his temper — one of his real ugly fits — and ran into the house for his shotgun. I loathed these scenes and persuaded Phil to beat it. We got into the hayloft over the stable and well down into the hay. Then we heard them coming, Moncure and Mother, both pretty wild. Mother was screaming, "You murderer! You murderer!"

Moncure was a handful to manage when he got started. Her temper was just as violent and in a crisis she was afraid of nothing. Once a tramp tried to get by her and into the house. Charles the Coachman and the gardener were away. She stood in the door and faced him. He bullied and threatened her. She never said a word and stared at him with all her fury.

After that she bought a pistol. It had a mother-of-pearl handle. She kept it in a little gray suede case on her nightstand. Uncle Charley would ride over from Narbeth, pin a paper bull's-eye on a tree, step off twenty paces and coach her pistol practice. She held her left hand over her left eye and got as far from the pistol as she could. She was quite beautiful in her frightened determination.

As a girl my mother rode well — side-saddle. She had had a bad fall, and from what her nurse told me at her death, it may have accounted for the fact that she spent much of her time in

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bed or lying on her back. She used to practise archery with an English yew bow that Mrs. Owen Jones Wister had won at a tournament and given her. She never took up bicycling, which just then was coming in.

Upon rare occasions my mother and Annie Deane went into town to shop. Mother wore a small black hat and a long black veil. Annie Deane wore a lavender dress and a shorter purple veil. She bristled in front with whalebone. On one such occasion we three were alone in the nursery. The baby was at the other end of the house. Moncure explained to us that the way to make oil paint was to mix our water colors in a bucket of water and add to it the scrapings from the cracks between the floor boards. We each had a box of water colors and we pooled them for the experiment. It seemed to work perfectly. We had no suitable brushes, however, for the job we had in mind. Francis suggested that we could cut off dogwood twigs and fasten them together. We had tired of the colored supplements of the *London Graphics* which were pasted with flour and water on the nursery walls. They were a nauseating series of Little Boys Blue with Newfoundland dogs, or little girls and Great Danes, or bulldogs and Newfoundland pups, or little girls and boys giving each other oranges. We got a bucket of water from the pump house, filled it with our oil paint and had the nursery walls pretty well covered by lunch time. After lunch, as there was still some paint left, we tackled the stairway and what my mother called the "hall." This was at the bottom of the stairs. There was a fireplace with a coat of chain mail and some crossed swords above it. The swords were supposedly worn by Colonel Clement Biddle, who at the Battle of Trenton was selected by Washington to receive the swords of the Hessian officers; and by his son, Clement Cornell Biddle, who commanded a Pennsylvania regiment of light infantry during the War of 1812. On either side of the chain mail were suspended a bronze copy of a Renaissance helmet and a bronze copy of a Greek shield. There were three mahogany

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chairs that were part of a set given to Clement Biddle by Washington; a Louis XIII stained oak settee with the date carved on it; some atrocious rococo hand-carved imitation Spanish chairs; and things done in mosaic, that were copied from something at the Alhambra in Granada. These were framed in black ebony and scattered about. At one time there was a plaster cast about four feet high of Michelangelo's slave, a drawing by Baudry which I thought very beautiful, of a naked girl looking at herself in a mirror, and a replica on porcelain in color of the famous painting by Guido Reni of Aurora — Dawn Driving her Chariot and Horses across the Firmament. There were also yellow Moorish ceramics, and Venetian glasses with dragons for handles, and a tall black thing that looked like a pitcher with an opening at the bottom but no funnel. I never knew what it was for — perhaps to smoke out of. I still have it. These things Father had brought back from his trips to Europe and they gave the "hall" a look of rich and somber dignity. With such accessories and nothing but our dogwood-twigg brushes to do the fine detail work, it was a slower job than the flat surfaces of the nursery, but we finished it to our satisfaction before my mother and Annie Deane returned from the station, loaded down with the market-baskets and their many purchases.

A year or two later we were being entertained by Poultney Bigelow on a North German Lloyd steamer. Mr. Bigelow had been regaling us all morning with anecdotes of all the naughty things he and Kaiser William had done together as children.

He asked: "And how many times have you boys been whipped?"

Francis looked at me. I looked at Francis. With the above house-painting episode perhaps in mind, and exaggerating somewhat for the honor of the family:

"Five times," Francis said with a soldierly air and he drew himself to attention.

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"Mercy," Mr. Bigelow murmured. "At your age I had been whipped twenty-eight times — with a horse whip."

Whenever I could I got down into the cellar of the Ardmore house. It was a place of mystery like the attic at Grandmother Robinson's. There were the great zinc wash tubs with running water, the wine closets and the coalbin, through which the cat could always escape to safety when I chased it down the cellar steps with Fangs. In the center was the furnace with its complicated system of vents, air boxes and pipes, that crisscrossed about the cobwebbed ceiling. I liked to pry open the furnace door. Sometimes the coals were fused in red-white shimmering heat. Sometimes the tiniest tongues of fire licked their way between the coals.

One day I found a box of sawdust near the furnace and threw a handful on the flames. The sawdust flared up so prettily and then sighed itself away to nothingness. Here was a new game. I quenched out all the little flames with sawdust, flinging it in feverishly, handful after handful. I had the whole inside of the furnace banked two inches deep by now, and just to give myself a dare, stuck my head in for a minute. When the explosion occurred I was standing about three feet away. It shook the whole house and tore the cast-iron gate from its hinges. It burnt my eyebrows off clean and my eyelashes and hair. My clothes were singed to the knees. I did the one thing I shouldn't have. I ran to the wash tubs and plunged my head and hands into the cold water. By that time everyone in the house was in the cellar. They seemed glad to find me alive. Dandy and the dogcart were dispatched after Dr. Gerhard, who soon arrived in his break. He was a brisk, efficient little man, drove a single-footer or pacer and looked very much like Lloyd George. He said as long as I wasn't blind there was nothing much to worry about, just as on a former occasion he had dismissed Charles with the remark that it was mighty lucky for both of us that he hadn't sat down half an inch more to one side. When Francis swallowed the shoe-

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button and one-cent piece, he said it was mighty lucky it hadn't been an English penny. I don't know what he said to Geoff when he came back from Atlantic City with samples of the fifty-seven varieties in his stomach. I suppose it was that it was a mighty lucky thing Heinz didn't manufacture a hundred.

I was in bed for about a month. The backs of my hands rose up first and looked like overdone, charred soufflés. My face came off in patches, here and there at different intervals. The first week was bad as I had to lie with my eyes closed and various sorts of poultices over me, olive oil, vascline, ice bags. After that it was a long and shining holiday. Aunt Lydia gave me a box of oil paints and my mother bought me Holland's *Butterfly Book*. I was up to my ears then in entomology and ornithology and alternated chapters from Holland's beautiful book and the *Birds of Pennsylvania*. When I went back to school I had to wear some sort of a cloth mask for a month or so and my wrists showed the scars for about ten years.

Francis and I rode all over the country on the ponies. Fangs, John Bull and Jimmy Biddle, the water spaniel, accompanied us. I trained Fangs to dig out field mice, to retrieve small game and to tree cats. He broke the backs of several, catching them on the run before they reached their tree, and I was very proud of him. Fangs and Jimmy Biddle both lived to a ripe age. John Bull had a rather sinister ending. One day he swallowed a toad and soon went about shaking his head, slobbering, frothing at the mouth. We tied him up. Everyone said he was getting rabies. Jenks the Slopman, who had pigs, and who lived near the foot of our avenue and drove up every day to empty our small slop can into one of his great ones, said nonsense, John Bull was all right. We didn't give him enough to eat. That was all the trouble. He took him away and tied him up and fed him raw meat and slops. A week later John Bull almost bit his hand off and they shot him.

On Lancaster and Montgomery Pikes we would edge very

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quietly up to the toll houses, and the tollkeepers who sat inside reading newspapers would not notice us. A few yards from the gates we would dig our heels into the ponies, stand up in the stirrups and charge by, shouting: "We skip the toll gate every time!" Eventually my mother would get the bill. It was two or three cents per horse depending on the distance from the preceding toll gate.

Francis and I had lead soldiers. We got most of them at a penny a box in a little dry-goods store on the corner of the Pike and Ardmore Avenue. We had names for all of them, every soldier in the two armies. The generalissimo of Francis' army was Sir Richard of Longsword. Another notable was Sir George of Howland, whom he had traded in from George Howe for a set of twelve different matchsticks. The leader of my outfit was Sir Olaf of Cedarwood. Our men went through a rather Spartan training before they were conceded any real distinction. We would partially burn them over candles, throw them into snowdrifts to be rescued after the spring thaws, or subject them to some other toughening experience. There was almost nothing left of Sir Olaf. A bit of one thigh, which I soldered to a new leaden charger.

We went into all this with some elaboration. Francis wrote Sir Richard a thirty-four-verse epic, commemorating his exploits as a young man. I find in an old notebook, sandwiched in between two lyrics entitled "Spring" and "Fighting for Liberty," and dated May 26, 1897, the beginning of an Odyssey of "Olaf of Cedarwood, Part I" (in red ink). The third verse (in black ink) I quote, not so much as a thing of any great distinction, but rather as an index of the sort of poetry which apparently children aspired to in May, 1897.

Remembretht thou the first Iquarub,
And thine horse Ibantinub?
A! thou wert born in rough Balcinia,
Not to befriend but fight the cub!

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We invented of course new religions, monetary systems, maps, wars and Nordic aspirations for our heroes. We were somewhat anticipating a similar but less innocent infantilism, which was to a great extent to engage the fantasy of Europe some forty years later.

We began to identify ourselves with our heroes. We had been reading *Robin Hood*. I carved a whole series of hand-chiseled wooden daggers. We cut ourselves hickory and ironwood staves and practised whole mornings rushing at one another, shouting: "Have at you!" Francis appropriated Geoff, who was about five years old, as his "squeer." The squeer was supposed to hold Francis' stirrup when he mounted Dandy, and carry a couple of extra ironwood stakes in case of accident.

We debated some more dramatic pursuit than bloodying each other's knuckles. Francis suggested witch hunting. There were four categories of witches, malevolent and terrifying in progressive order. I can only recall three. The stone witches were the lowest and least significant. They disguised themselves as pebbles and lodged in the ponies' feet, between the frog and the shoe. Their aim, of course, was to throw the ponies, or cause them to stumble and give us a spill on a macadam pike. They never threw us on the soft red dirt roads.

Far more resourceful and ruthless were the corn witches. They could disguise themselves exactly like human beings, like Sir Richard or Sir Olaf. But they could never get rid of their corn-silk mustaches. If a corn witch had his back turned, he looked just like one of us, quite harmless. Then he would whisk about and you saw the horrible tawny, red-tipped, drooping mustache, the ferocious leer, the blood-shot eye, the bared fang.

The three of us went hunting corn witches together. Sir Richard and I crept ahead, crawling cautiously between the tall rows of horse corn on Farmer Grimes's property. The squeer panted behind carrying extra hardwood staves and wooden daggers; and praying to his "huckey" stone which we had given

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him as a talisman and which he carried, sewed in a little flannel bag, about his neck.

The ripe horse corn waved high above our heads and the August sun sucked the hot rich smells from the Pennsylvania cornfields.

When we had got deep into the field, Sir Richard and Sir Olaf plunged forward. A corn witch had been startled up and the pursuers were after their quarry. We ran, zigzagged and double-tracked. In no time the terrified squeer was left behind, turning this way and that, encumbered with his ironwood staves. He knew he was done for.

We would come back then, taking our time, fastening on our corn-silk mustaches. The squeer was too terrified to run and mumbled prayers to his huckey stone. We led him out of the corn, into the woods, tied him to a tree and started building a fire, reminiscing the while.

"You certainly strangled Sir Olaf between finger and thumb, brother."

"Ah yes! Ah yes! It was great sport. And I fairly laughed my insides out when you had Sir Richard wriggling about on the tip of your spit."

"What wiry old birds! They would surely have been tough eating. All skin and bones and gristle."

"Yes, brother, I always says: 'Eat 'em young and eat 'em tender.'"

This would go on for a while until we thought the squeer had taken enough punishment.

"Listen, brother! Ha! I hear sounds! Someone is approaching!! Quick! Be off!! We're done for!!!"

The corn witches would plunge off through the thorns and spicebush. And a moment later we charged in: "A la rescousse! A la rescousse!" We untied the squeer and he would help us pick up the witches' trail through the broken spicebush. He was proud and grateful and we surely had great times together.

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Wood witches were another matter. Less obvious in their approach and harder to assault in frontal attack, since they protected themselves through spells and incantations. They, too, could disguise themselves — but exactly — like humans. Not even the tell-tale mustaches. There was just one possible give-away, the faintest, most subtle, intangible bit of evidence for all the lurking danger. They could never quite control a certain well-known tendency of witches to tremble. So there was always a slight nervous tic, a certain unsteadiness of the hand, the quivering of an eyelid. As everyone knew, they wormed their way into a household, and over a period of time would poison everything with their foul stinking presence.

About that time Nana was paying my mother her yearly visit. She must have been nearly eighty. In the evenings she would read to us one of Andrew Lang's Red, Green, Yellow or Blue Fairy Books. The squeer would pull out his huckey stone and begin to mumble his prayers to it. Annie Deane grew suspicious. Then one weekend Francis Boyer, who was about the squeer's age, came over from Norristown. All afternoon we had a grand witch hunt — corn witches of course and perhaps a stone witch or two, small game thrown in. Francis Boyer didn't stand the strain so well. He got hysterics undressing, threshed about a good deal in his crib, and shouted in the night. The cat was out of the bag. Francis Biddle and I promised solemnly to organize some new activity for Sir Olaf and Sir Richard.

It would perhaps be unfair to say that my mother disliked children. Sometimes she might give that impression. I think she liked them homeopathically, in small and infrequent doses. She had an excellent palate for wine, and enjoyed her wine in much the same manner. She was fastidious and frugal. Half a glass of old Madeira once in a fortnight. With her children, metaphorically, she was forced to consume gallons and gallons of half-fermented cheap red ink, a lot of which was always spilling over

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her dresses. She would have preferred to imagine her relations with us like those of a lovely gardener with her rosebushes. Straw-bonneted and blue-ribboned, she gathers her dainty basket and garden scissors, and occasionally toward sundown strolls to the rose beds and snips off a basketful of tender blossoms, trimming away, here a dead leaf, there a faded bud; she returns to the terrace, empties them all about her and then leisurely arranges them in tall vases of majolica. Among her rare papers — for she destroyed most of them — is the following from Cousin Jeff Taylor to Uncle Beverley, her brother:

St. James' Rectory,
Accomac, Virginia.
December 7th, 1911.

MY DEAR BEV:

Your letter of yesterday . . . came to me this morning.

She is a dear indeed, and I cannot express to you how touched I am.

It is now just seventeen years ago since I spent the night with her at Ardmore. Then her boys were all, except her youngest perhaps, going to school or college, and she, another Cornelia, watching over her jewels. If she were a man, I would say she was the most knightly one I ever knew. I see her now as she sat in her sitting room before a suit of old armor that hung on the chimney piece, and the scene recalled to me the stories about young knights watching their armor, the eve before they were dubbed knights. She seemed watching the armor for them until one by one they should, each, take her place. God bless her and give her the comfort in them that she deserves.

Yours faithfully
JEFF.

This was by no means an unusual tribute to the effect that my mother produced on those who admired her. It is comforting,

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too, already in 1894 to have impressed a Virginia clergyman as a jewel and a knight without armor.

We grew and blossomed, much influenced by the directive intent of Mother's calculations and enthusiasms, but quite strictly alone in each other's company. Our personalities expanded in inverse ratio to the pruning and cultivation of our manners.

Something was done, however, about our social obligations apart from the mere necessity of governess or tutor. Occasionally the four Biddle girl cousins were used, like wooden duck decoys to lure us back into a deportment of gentility. We viewed them with curiosity mingled with suspicion. And too often our fears were justified. Events that began auspiciously ended in cloud-bursts. One such Sunday visit was the occasion of a feast the memory of which still leaves my glands dripping. Rich oyster soup, speckled with tiny pink crabs; rare roast beef, all dressed in golden crisp, girded with baked potatoes and Yorkshire pudding; tomato pudding sweetened and toasted brown; corn soufflé, slithery okras, rich cakes of rice or hominy; and to cap all a huge dish of "nigger in his shirt," chocolate cornstarch pudding floating in whipped cream. Conversation lagged and we sawed our grinders to good intent. One fixed idea burned in eight breasts. Sixteen jaws were pumping in noisy unison. There was after all a bottom to every dessert bowl of happiness. I worked less noisily but more smoothly than Francis and never wasted a moment. I finished my helping first and shoved my plate silently across to my mother for a second. She took the empty dessert bowl and firmly planted it in front of me. I was too humiliated to speak, nor had I an explosive nature. I suffered a concentration of shame and misery. I bowed my head for a moment, stifled every emotion and then looked about me in dumb suffering. I saw nothing but the crowns of seven heads bent low over the seven plates of what remained of that magnifi-

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cent dish. Like a trapped animal I watched and waited. Francis was the next to lick his plate clean. With the same arm flex with which he laid down his spoon, and without looking up, he too slid his plate across to my mother. She reached over, seized the empty dessert bowl and set it this time in front of Francis. He gave a startled cry. The four Biddle girls looked up in inquiry. He let out one loud bellow of rage and disappointment. I breathed a sigh of relief.

Then and for many subsequent years I cared nothing for honor, much for appearances.

My motives were usually delicate. My manners were less so. Moncure, in the role of the elder brother, often admonished and occasionally prayed for me. He has kept this up for some forty-five years with, I am afraid, a growing sense of disillusion, amounting sometimes to bitterness.

Annie Deane used to superintend the ritual of our undressing and evening prayers. She began by reading to us from *The Back of the North Wind* or *Mopsie the Fairy*. She ended up by coaxing, wheedling and threatening Moncure with the Fire Department. Her technique was a good deal that of a Texan horse wrangler. First at one and then at another, keeping her weather eye on the whole outfit. Whoever undressed first had the privilege of saying his prayers to her. They were a routine affair: Lord's Prayer, Now-I-lay-me-down-to-sleep-I-pray-the-Lord-my-soul-to-keep stuff, with rare innovations; and ending up all in one breath: "God bless Father and Mother and little brothers and make George Francis Moncure and Geoff and Annie and my Nana good boys for Jesus Christ sake Amen."

One evening I must have been particularly gross in the preparation of my evening toilet. Perhaps Moncure had been smouldering over me for weeks. He undressed rapidly and hurried over to Annie Deane. When he came to the "And make George

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Francis Moncure and Geoff and Annie and my Nana good boys," there was an ominous pause.

"And especially George," he added.

I asked: "What's he praying for me for, Annie?"

"Because, George, you are so bold for Jesus Christ sake Amen."

Certain rich, subtle characters can be presented as clear-cut profiles. There are others, however, of whom an exact simulacrum can never be made. My mother was such a person, many-sided and many-faceted: irrational, unexpected, volatile, vaporish; and upon other occasions just the reverse, being dominant, purposeful, high-minded and high-moraled, undeviating and single-tracked. I conceive of her more as a tremendous flow of energy; generated, as energy is from positive and negative poles, perhaps from many opposing forces, currents, sources, placed in the frame of her social, physical, economic, chronologic environment; and then bursting, exploding, as waves of energy will, upon the rocks, the reefs, into the dreary shallows, through the occasional channels, over the precipices, the cataracts of life.

One is not apt to think of or describe in terms of energy, dynamics, or explosions, a woman who spent much of her life in bed or reclining with closed eyes upon a chaise longue; who conceived of herself as a chronic invalid; and who seemed in a physical sense to possess so little vitality and resilience that her greatest problem in life often became an effort to guard herself against any act which would emotionally drain her; such as a human relation, the display of any warmth of feeling, the reviving of a memory, even the overt participation in the emotions of another; and to guard herself equally against all the physical impingements of life, the presence of children in the room, the household administration, the need of social contacts and the preparation of herself for such social contacts; even, eventually, the retention of her own possessions. All such contacts, emo-

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tional and physical, seemed so completely to drain my mother that she grew more and more to avoid them, cutting herself off almost completely from life itself, until she seemed as if suspended in the vacuum of her own emotions. Yet from this vacuum she continued, almost until the day she died, to scheme, to protect, to direct, to thwart, to untangle — in as far as they affected her children — the threads of destiny. Until the end her motions and gestures seemed as fresh and energetic as a young woman's; her emotions welled up as overflowing; her handwriting was as round and firm, close, rather heavy, deliberate; up-trailing in energy, optimism and vitality — the handwriting of an active, energized business administrator, never that of an invalid or of a neurotic.

The last letter which I had from her, dated two days before her eightieth birthday, and consequently a fortnight or so before her death, was dictated; and mentioned the fact that she felt too ill to write herself. She continued:

Will you please let me know soon the unpaid balance of your mortgage. I would like to pay it.

Your very loving M.

Then in her own penciled hand, beginning with the slightest hesitancy but ending up round and firm and up-trailing as ever:

I don't believe I shall have so much longer — so please write soon. Dear George. Love. M. I suppose you got the 2000 for wh I have the receipts.

FRANCES BIDDLE.

That short scrawl, the final purposeful, protective burst of energy, was the symbol of her life's intent, the alpha and omega, the only final justification, which my mother could have prof-fered for whatever reward we four boys might lay at her feet.

I often wondered if destiny had intended her to be solely and so completely a mother. If so destiny had ill-equipped her for

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the task. I rather think that by some curious chemical transformation her more general and specific interests, affections and loves were sublimated and fused by my father's death into one driving passion, the upbringing and education of her four children.

At the very end, at that last pagan ritual, when the coffin glided down the shaft, with the slow inevitable motion of a ship gliding off its ways into the unknown, her only remaining sister, my dear Aunt Nathalie, stood beside me. They had long been separated and had come together during the few happy years that preceded her death.

"Often I felt I did not understand your mother. Nor did any of us. Some things about her now I understand. She knew — and none of us ever quite realized she knew — that after your father's death she could never again be happy, never again have peace, never again rest, until she achieved this moment. All her life she was waiting to die, yet could not die, until she had done with you all what she felt he would have wanted."

Grandfather Robinson was an old man when the Civil War broke out, too old at least to fight; but my mother was already old enough to help cut up the lint and tie it in packages to send to the Confederate wounded. Her older brother John fought for the South and ran the blockade to England. Her older brothers Edmund and Beverley fought for the North, Beverley not so long out of college. She was too young to remember much about it all. She did remember, however, that a salesgirl in John Wanamaker's store had radiantly announced to Grandmother the news of Lee's surrender at Appomattox; and that Grandmother had loudly denied it and sworn up and down that she would never again enter John Wanamaker's as long as she lived — which she never did.

My mother grew up in a large family — eight of them. Two more had died in infancy. Her sister Agnes was a generation

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older. So were some of the others. But there were four of them of an approximate vintage, Moncure, Charley, my mother and Aunt Nathalie. Grandmother adored and spoiled them. Grandfather seems to have been too old to exert much discipline. I have a feeling he spoiled my mother, too, being proudest of her. She was beautiful and spirited and clever. Her upbringing was chaotic. There was no regular schooling, no disciplined routine. Uncle Moncure had unusual gifts but he suffered from weak eyes. Grandfather persuaded him to throw up his studies and gave him horses to keep him out of mischief. Before he was twenty he was a gentleman jockey in the hardest-drinking crowd in America, and had ridden and won steeplechase races in Philadelphia and Baltimore. What my mother knew never came from schooling. She was made much of by Mrs. Owen Jones Wister, who was a daughter of Fanny Kemble; and before her coming out into society was taken abroad by Agnes Irwin, who was a great educator, a profound mind and a forceful personality. Later she was to become Dean of Radcliffe.

In Paris Miss Irwin introduced Father to my mother. He was quite different from what she had known in her own turbulent household. The origin of the one family was tide-water Virginian and of the other Quaker. Father read Horace in the original. Grandfather Biddle had translated and published "The Oration on the Crown" of Æschines and Demosthenes. Grandfather Robinson was an engineer and a railroad man. Grandfather Biddle was a classical scholar, a lawyer of the old school and for years the leader of the Philadelphia Bar. George Wharton Pepper and, over a course of years, some fifty other young law students read Blackstone in his office. He was a Democrat and a States' Rights man and consequently during the early years of the Civil War had been in distinctly bad odor, but when Lee invaded Pennsylvania he clashed with Grandfather's States' Rights principles. So the latter quit his law and his Greek translations and enlisted in a volunteer regiment. His children were

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too young to fight but his brother Chapman distinguished himself as Colonel of a Pennsylvania regiment at the Battle of Gettysburg.

Father was twelve years older than my mother and a brilliant young lawyer. Later he was to teach law, and through Dean Langdell of the Harvard Law School helped to introduce the "case system" at the University of Pennsylvania. One would like to think of him engaged in lighter preoccupations that summer. Surely he and Miss Irwin exchanged Latin quotations from Horace and French maxims from Montaigne, but perhaps he found occasion to initiate my mother into the charm of the Romantic School of German poetry. She told me subsequently that it was he who started her in her German studies. Perhaps he took her to the Louvre, or showed her the antiques he had picked up in Greece or the photographs of Millet and of Guido Reni. They wandered together through the pale pink harmonies of the Place des Vosges — the most Philadelphian bit of color in all of Paris. The Palais Royal of Napoleon had vanished nearly a decade before. *Trilby* was not to be written for another decade. But one had glimpses of Henri Murger's *Bohème*. Americans in Paris still read Victor Hugo and de Musset.

Ah, to meet in the lilac season and to fall in love in Paris!

Grandfather Biddle and Grandfather Robinson were the oldest and best of friends. They were delighted when they heard these rumors from Miss Irwin of their children's expeditions to the Louvre and of their incursions into German lyric poetry.

"Kennst du das Land, wo die Zitronen blühn?"

My mother told Father when she got back from Europe that she would have to come out first and then wait a year before she made up her mind. They were married on the twenty-eighth of June, 1879, at St. Mark's Church in Philadelphia. She went straight home after the ceremony, locked herself in her room and stayed in bed for a week.

If for the next ten years or so she was secure in her happiness

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and the path she had chosen, it would not be denying the fact that often she led Father a hell of a life. She might be asked to serve as Patroness to the Philadelphia Assembly, and at the last moment refuse to attend. Philadelphia society could politely shudder and go hang. Father might invite some friends a week in advance to dinner. My mother might or might not decide to come down, or just stay in bed. If through perverse and fickle obstinacy she could at the last moment have refused to participate in the births of her own sons I am sure she would have done so. While Father was alive such caprice was made possible by his own forethought or patience, and the solid regularity of his income. When properly bulwarked and safeguarded by a plentiful background of nurses and domestic comfort, the most dutiful mother can afford many gestures of wantonness or irresponsibility. What matter, then, if the parents were away for a winter in Switzerland, off for the summer to the North Shore. Father could anchor his happiness in the knowledge that under the squalls and whitecaps were unplumbed depths of loyalty, love and integrity. My mother could afford such elfin whims as her fancy indulged in, secure in the boundless faith and protection that was lavished on her. Father must have been often sorely tried. They were deeply and completely happy.

With his death every prop that sustained happiness was kicked from under. There was indeed but one prop that sustained the will to live at all. She had four small sons and a slender income, just enough if properly parceled out to pay for everything that four boys' education called for. There would be nothing left over to pay for her own desires. She had no desires. She was dead to life. She was thirty-three years old that spring.

For years my mother dressed in black and wore a long mourning veil. She never mentioned Father's name without the tears immediately welling to her eyes. I never mentioned Father's name to anyone without a deep feeling of abasement and self-pity. Years later a school friend said to me, "My father is a doctor.

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What's yours?" "He's a lawyer," I said. Perhaps I was actually ashamed of his death. Perhaps I had been conditioned to feel that a reference to him was too great an evocation of sorrow. In my forty-second year I grew a beard. I had not seen my mother for a year or more. When, on a visit to her in Chestnut Hill, I entered her bedroom, she burst into a flood of tears. It made me rather angry. Several years later she said to me: "You reminded me of your father." She had not had the courage to say so at the time. The day after Father died my mother asked Cecilia Beaux to make a drawing of him. Aunt Nathalie who was in the house arranged matters. While Cecilia Beaux worked my mother paced up and down the room below. For over forty years she never mentioned this to Aunt Nathalie or ever once mentioned my father's name to her. My mother showed me Cecilia Beaux's drawing once and asked me what she should do with it. I begged her to leave it to me, although it was not a fine drawing. She promised to do so but later destroyed it.

Once during these early years she copied into a notebook the following:

If I should never see you again promise me in yr heart that you will not relapse again into slothful slumber, that you will look and listen; face the real light of day, make part of the . . . band of labourers . . . collect the harvest . . . plentiful always to those who do not dream life away.

My mother aroused a feeling of pure idolatry in the hearts of older women, such as Mrs. Gillespie, Agnes Irwin, Mrs. Owen Jones Wister or Bishop Potter's daughter, Clara Davidge — in the last case a contemporary. They worshiped her and their love and fulsome tribute were perhaps a mild substitute for the admiration which she steadfastly refused to exact from men. She must have had admirers. How could she not? My fancy likes to play with the possibility that Henry James was one of them. He had met her in 1910 at a house party at Butler Place. Mrs.

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Wister was a bluestocking and took a certain pride in keeping abreast of the current French drama. Her mind was bold and ardent but her moral standards stuck like a balking horse before many a current French idiom. Salacious innuendos and bawdy words threatened to terminate her intimacy with contemporary French literature. My mother, however, belonged to a younger and tougher generation and when intellectually stirred she stopped at nothing. She undertook then literally with a stroke of the pen to shield Mrs. Wister's moral susceptibilities during her digressions into French literature. She read the plays in advance, buttressed up with a dictionary of slang, and underscored whatever obscenities she felt over-ripe for Mrs. Wister's palate.

During the house party in question Henry James had sauntered down ahead of the other guests, and fingering through the various yellow paper volumes on the withdrawing-room table, had come across several comedies, heavily underlined, which seemed much to his fancy. He was deep in one of them when Mrs. Wister came in and presented him to my mother, serious-minded and excited by the prospect of such an encounter.

"And who is it," smiled the great man to Mrs. Wister, "who has been annotating your plays with such literary understanding?"

"Oh," said Mrs. Wister, who was somewhat confused about the method of my mother's editing, "Fanny Biddle has been marking her favorite passages for me to glance through."

This introduction, which he beautifully felt must be met full on without the shadow of a smile or mental deflection, might question the particular epithet of all others which my mother insisted was the one he used in describing her. He had subsequently called her the most elusive — the only elusive — woman he had ever met in America.

It would seem indeed that the impression she made upon him was lastingly vivid in his perception of the impalpable. So

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one gathers from a letter by their mutual friend, Clara Potter Davidge.

62 Washington Square

April 26

MY DARLING FANNY:

I was in the drawing room just now, just after some friends had gone, when out of the Lord's open, in walks Mr. Henry James. He came to see Mrs. Elliott in the top of the house, and was shown into my drawing room, while he sent up a message. So I just told him I was not a bit of harm, and offered him tea, and told him of my thread-like feeling of a tie to his brother, and we began right in the middle. Of course I said at once that I had been so glad for you, who I so loved, to have had the pleasure of that stay this year at Mrs. Wister's. He disclaimed at once all power of giving pleasure to you, but he began instantly to talk about you. I must have given him some sense of confidence, or else of love for you, for he said you were the "most elusive" of all creatures, and that while you made it so impossible for any exact touch to be laid upon you, you yourself were not a participant in this elusiveness.

These are not the exact words — am not used to his rush of words of course. I said yes, but you were utterly unconscious, and then he said practically that that was what he had already just said of you. Of course then I had to tell him what you were to me, and why, and really we only had seven minutes, but when Mrs. Elliott sent for him he said, "Goodbye for the present" and I did not really love him a bit; only I adored that he had so loved you, and I write you this because you would hate me to be a discredit to you, and I so hope I was not.

He wanted to know about the boys and I told him how they were Heaven's own imps, and how wonderful; and he said he could not think of commonplace boys with you at all. I wonder

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he could even think the words. I never thanked you for your note about Uncle's death. Such a life as now! I will try and write of it.

C. S. D.

Clara Davidge was a born friend, missionary, zealot and reformer. Her father was Bishop of New York State. She once bought an old farm on Staten Island. It had a pirate's chest in it, she told me. Here she collected, fed, clothed, and supported over a period of years a heterogeneous lot of reconstructed alcoholics, artists and poets. One of them was Edwin Arlington Robinson. Another was a future husband of hers, who swore off hard liquor to take up painting where he had left it many years before. She and he later had much to do with the organization of the Armory Show of 1913. It is a pity she spent so little time in correspondence.

My mother drew much comfort and approbation from the affection of these two or three older women who idolized her. But for forty-five years in every great undertaking, upon every slightest contingency, through *sturm und drang*, when the weather was ominous with electric tension, or on those rare days when the sky was serene, she depended absolutely on the firmness, the tact and the loyalty of Annie Deane, her lean and diminutive Sancho Panza. Annie became her nursery-governess, housekeeper, general advisor, the spillway of her gusts and eddies, her moral comforter and confessor, her chief of staff, her official spokesman and her Colonel House. She was accepted before Father's death as one of the family, and her social and political stature grew throughout the years. Not only did she become an authority among our aunts, uncles and relatives upon matters of pedagogy and education, but she grew to be the arbiter of many questions of social taste or moral standards.

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Scotch-Irish, raised in Canada, she inherited certain conservative old-world traditions. Staunchly Church of England, she was soaked with religious hypocrisy; and of all the human beings I have ever known, she was the stoutest, the most brazen and incorruptible snob. Religion with her was not so much a solace or even a threat as a splendid ritual of social stability. She was never really shocked by our own militant agnosticism or by the occasional robustness of our language. On the contrary these qualities in us became, antiphonally, as it were, the confirmation of her own grace. Human and understanding as any Jesuit, she took much solid comfort in eavesdropping on the other side of the bathroom partition, late at night, as we exchanged confidences. Such droppings as she gleaned she would store away in the recesses of her memory, not for any idle or prurient end, but to be used for godly purpose, brought forth at the ordained time in the long and arduous task of rearing us. She was seldom exposed for she had a tread as padded as a jungle beast, and when we occasionally caught her spying a proper show of anger and burning cheeks always set her up in the light of her own standards.

Her snobbism was in part a national inheritance and was therefore complicated in its old-world ritual. She insisted from the beginning that her position was that of a "nursery-governess." She realized that without a knowledge of languages and music, and shorn of the tag of "*Fraulein*" or "Miss," she could not rate strictly as governess; yet she was firm in her insistence that she was not a nurse. She used the front stairs although she had access to the back. Much of her day was spent in the kitchen, but she took her frugal meals alone on the edge of her bedroom sewing machine. She called the servants by their first name but below the nursery she was Miss Deane. To my mother and to us boys and indeed to all our relatives she was Annie, but this intimacy implied the familiarity of a social tie rather than any social condescension. She was not accordingly driven to the church on Ardmore Avenue at an early hour with the rest of

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the domestics. Dressed in resounding lavender silk and with the expression of a Roman cardinal, she walked abreast of my mother through the College woods to service at the Haverford Church. As we neared the worshipers chatting in groups on the church lawn, she would draw somewhat apart, eyes on the ground, and wait until we had entered. Then she would slowly glide in, like a ship to its mooring; and come to anchor among the rear pews, where she followed loudly in the responses. With an eagle eye for any petticoat that trailed half an inch below a dress, she would garner up any succulent bit she felt worthy to retrieve for my mother's inspection. When the service was over she would mingle easily with those domestics she had met from other houses. Although she had few intimates she possessed a vast acquaintance which she adroitly tapped when in need of information.

Annie Deane, or Miss Deane — in whichever role one chooses to evoke her — was Victorian to the very marrow of her whale-bones. On the one or two occasions in her life when she was confronted in me with what she felt was the spirit of evil, she was not so much angered or sorrowed as, literally, almost choked to death. She was aware of evil, and wallowed, good Calvinist that she was, in its acceptance; but when she actually faced it, it just would not go down, and stuck in her throat until she nearly strangled. She was singularly human — too much so for our own comfort — for her suspicion was boundless and she had a nose keener than any setter's.

The following confidence, which seems even more of an explosion today, may serve as a partial explanation or hint of her Calvinistic suppressions. She was living in a world of sin and must flee from it in her frailty where she could not face it in her strength. Of what the occasion was I have only the dimmest memory.

"George," she said in answer to, or in mitigation of, some murmuring wail of self-pity in the darkness of my bedroom, and

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bending over me, herself too dry for any tear to glisten, "George, I too have a husband."

She had married him years and years ago when she was an innocent child. I have forgotten what he did, beat her up, got lousy drunk, took a woman. But she realized — like that — that she was cohabiting with the spirit of evil. So she rose up and left him; and had never heard from him since, and knew not his whereabouts. I promised in the dark to keep her secret. It bound us closer. To this moment I have never divulged it.

One year I attended a small Quaker school. Richard Gummere, eldest son of the great scholar of medieval literature, was the star of the school, just as his father was the shining light of the College. I remember the awe with which I saw him spell out in large block letters and then read aloud to the class: "Mr. Sharpless [the College President] has a Fine White Horse." It was my initiation into the magic of Prose and Literature. From Richard's brother, Sam, I picked up words of humbler origin. On my return from school one day, when Annie Deane reproved me for urinating on the front-door steps and bade me come into the house, I told her the hell I would, she was a God damn dirty bugger. Years later during a course of criminal law at the Harvard Law School I learned that this latter "low term of disparagement" derives from the name of "a most heinous crime practised by the ancient Lombards; and tracing its source from the Latin *Bulgarus*, which means Bulgarian, and then later a heretic, from a sect of heretics in Bulgaria in the eleventh century, to whom abominable practices were imputed; Bulgaria, Bug-garia, or buggery being coitus *per anum* or with an animal other than a swan or goose." Of all this my mother said nothing, but she took me on her knee and explained to me gently and reverently that when I "God damned" Annie Deane I was asking the Almighty for her eternal and everlasting condemnation and punishment through hell's fires.

As we grew older and were shunted off to boarding-school or

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college Annie Deane could feel her absolutely delegated authority diminish. She maintained, however, and at times even increased her sense of power through devious channels and acts of espionage. She was aware of my mother's suppressed jealousy of any young debutante who rivaled her in her sons' affection. And so on the none too frequent occasions when the candles were lighted, the sherry decanted and the invited guests had left the bedroom where they had laid their wraps and galoshes, she would slowly go through the articles of clothing with her long setter's nose; and could afterwards tell to a nicety just what garment needed repair, had been done over or had an unpleasant body odor. Of all the guests that entered our house over a period of fifteen years or so, there were but two that Annie Deane conceded to be young ladies. Miss Anna Ingersoll was one. I have forgotten the other.

Her scouting trips and covert information did occasionally more than fix my mother's prejudices. That winter a certain one of the four boys had supposedly become engaged to a lady, who, from the point of view of my mother and Annie Deane, might, if the match were consummated, not so much wreck that brother's happiness as retard his development. But this time my mother could not be roused to any action. She simply refused to envisage the possibility of such a development and double-locked herself in her bedroom, deaf to Annie's importunities. Annie, seeing that proof was needed, proceeded swiftly and deftly through the trunks, bureau drawers, valises, pockets and receptacles of the brother in question, and emerged therefrom with every sort of condemning evidence. With these various papers and tokens she returned to my mother's bedroom, knocked deferentially at the door and imparted to her the findings. My mother was very indignant, and shouted back that this underhand espionage was shocking and dishonorable; and that she would have nothing to do with it. She said: "Go away." Her back hurt her.

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Annie Deane got down on her knees and shoved the evidence, letter by letter, underneath the bedroom door and then retired to her own quarters. The result was that an hour later a family conclave was summoned to my mother's side; certain of us were told that something had to be done immediately for the happiness not only of this brother but of the poor girl in question. It was suggested that they should take the first train to New York, hunt up the lady in her hotel, or there wait for her; and persuade her by every means possible that this young man was not fit either to support her, to marry her or to bring her happiness.

Such tactical triumphs Annie Deane accepted with deference, never alluding to any participation she might have had, retiring with bowed head to the depths of her humility, yet ever thereby increasing in the sure knowledge of her power.

Our friendship, which had grown so strong through mutual respect and affection, was shattered some twenty years later on what I believe was to each of us a moral principle. Annie would concede no compromise in me with the spirit of Satan and Adultery. I, having lived for years away from home, insisted on a strict convention of noninterference with my freedom. I had engaged that summer a lovely model, who of necessity frequented our summer rented cottage, although, for propriety's sake, she was lodged in a nearby boardinghouse. Annie Deane had immediately wormed herself into the intimacy of this charming but babbling young person, and at the end of a fortnight knew everything of her that one lady is apt to tell to another. If the model and I had many strong drinks together in my studio late of a Saturday night, Annie Deane would be the first to know it the next morning, for she always drove the young person to Sunday worship. This really sweet-dispositioned and generous child had a certain propensity, a psychic twist, a weakness for all sorts of harmless exaggerations. From various cronies and gossips of Annie Deane's rumors began to drift in that my young col-

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laborator was affianced to me, that she could not quite make up her mind, that she refused to say yes until my divorce was definitely granted. All this gossip stirred Annie's sleuthlike instincts. Like a bloodhound she was on the scent, and would dog our steps, pry open confidences and follow us at night from the studio to the rustling gloom of the garden shrubbery. Here, one all too moonlight evening, she witnessed what made her choke and strangle.

Next day she repaired to my mother and did then and thereafter during the length of the summer months menace, cajole, blackmail and browbeat that poor, harassed woman to take some punitive action. She threatened to write to my brother Moncure, as the head of the family; to write to my wife or to my father-in-law; to report me to the owner of our rented cottage. She was living under a roof of sin and cried shame on my mother who by her silence became an accessory in the collusion.

A fortnight before our return to New York my peace of mind was flooded with a burst of tears from my mother who told me with sobs that as a last threat Annie was to confront the model openly with our corruption, God knows in what public place.

That night I faced Annie, mad enough to have shaken her, and, I am sure, threatened her physically. She stood up to me, however, the champion of the Lord's right, shaming me for the evil I had brought into my mother's home, thanking the God she prayed to that he had gathered my father to him before he might witness the depravity which had sprung from his loins, calling loudly that my years would be shortened in liquor and sin. She stood manfully to her guns, cursing me to the end. But my threats had some effect, for the model returned a fortnight later to New York, innocent of the passions which her gentle presence had engendered around her.

Once the danger was removed, I was only too anxious to be on peaceful terms again with Annie. She would have none of me,

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and always thereafter treated me as something unregenerate and a little vile. Several years later I came close to dying of a fever in the tropics. My mother wrote me that Annie Deane, having brooded over the news, had set to, as of old, to sew me a pair of flannel pyjamas. I knew then that at least I had been partially forgiven.

As a child I was shy and often shrank in real agony from the shame of a situation which existed largely in my own imagination, but which none the less to me was the cause of the deepest humiliation.

Once I swallowed thirteen prune stones with no physical after-effects — I have a perfect colon — but accompanied by acute moral suffering. I was visiting Mrs. E. Walter Clark at Chestnut Hill round Christmas time. The children of my age were out; but I sat and made conversation with Mrs. Clark, who in return plied me with a box of prunes. I was very partial to them and accepted them each time with a bow, swallowing the stones one by one, as I was too timid to ask for something in which to deposit them and I was convinced that voiding things from my mouth was not done in society.

"Just put your stones in this ashtray," she said at length.

I didn't say anything.

"George, what have you done with your prune stones?"

I didn't say anything.

She looked at me intently for a long time. I stared back at her, swelling with shame. At length I gathered the courage to say:

"My prunes didn't have any stones, Mrs. Clark."

She looked at me for a split second without any expression and we resumed our conversation.

Mrs. E. Walter Clark was a lady.

Mrs. Owen Jones Wister, a daughter of Fanny Kemble, was a great lady in her own right as well as by tradition, but, despite





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the profusion of her gifts and the energy of her will to please, I never felt quite relaxed in her presence. She possessed a gracious dignity, a way of being always in the right, a smooth Athena-like brow which challenged my self-possession and at moments crushed me.

The day we first met remains in my memory a golden one. Dressed in some lovely flowing print gown, ribboned and bonneted, she had led us by the hand up the long avenue at Butler Place. A gate and a high brick wall shut out the lawn and shrubbery, the buildings, the stables and greenhouses, from the traffic and movement of the Old York Road. There was moss under the chestnuts and wistaria festooned the coachhouse. The lawn was broken with patches of periwinkle and starred with Quaker ladies. She had taken us to the gardens and given us our first smell of rose geranium and lemon verbena. There in the hothouses were real little orange and lemon trees, and grapevines and figs. Later her son Owen — Dan she called him, telling us over and over all the terrible, naughty things he had done at school and at college — took us to the stables where they were grooming a dapple-gray; and the cement floor was running from the hose; and the smell of ammonia mingled with the acrid smell of sweat and the rich musty odor of the horse stalls. Owen had asked us both if we liked music. We nodded back yes. And which was our favorite tune, he had asked us. Francis looked at me and I looked at Francis. There was a hurriedly whispered consultation. “Yankee Doodle” we both shouted together. He had pitched Francis into the air and caught him on his shoulders; and we had proceeded to the house, Francis clutching at his ears and wreathed in happiness. We drank raspberry vinegar with a sprig of mint and then Owen sat down at the piano and played and played to our hearts’ content. And did we recognize the music, he smiled back to us. We certainly did not, but might one hazard a guess? I looked at Francis and Francis looked at me. By the other’s expression each knew that

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consultation was hopeless. No we didn't recognize the tune, we said; what was it?

"Yankee Doodle"!

I had been given a new sixteen-bore shotgun. I was already at boarding-school in New England but the summers we still spent at Ardmore, and so this memory lingers with the Wister-Ardmore days rather than with the eleven years' death in New England. Mostly I shot English sparrows on the wing. They blackened the sky in flocks of hundreds, drumming like partridges in their short wheeling flights among the early stacked horse corn on Farmer Grimes's acres. Once I brought down a dozen at one shot. The fat from their corn diet spoiled their feathers when I tried to skin and mount them. But they were as tender as reed birds — New England bobolinks. I spitted them in the woods below the house and feasted on them. One day I shot a sparrow hawk and a little green heron — a shite-poke — on the wing. I was terribly proud and presented them to my mother. The next day was a Sunday. She suggested that I should take them over to show to Gammar at Butler Place on the Old York Road. Francis and I were scrubbed and curried and gotten up in a way that would have put little Lord Fauntleroy to shame. White sneakers, short white trousers, white shirts; red, white and black Groton belts, red, white and black Groton neckties, straw hats with red, white and black hatbands, and black leather kneecaps. How we ever ran the gauntlet of the Market Street muckers, from Broad Street station to the Reading Depot on Twelfth Street, God only knows. The whole day is one panic-stricken blur. Carefully wrapped in a basket I carried the disemboweled sparrow hawk and the shite-poke to lay at Gammar's feet. The great lady met us at the foot of her avenue. She would drive us to a restaurant in the neighborhood and there we should select our own menu, everything we never ate at home. She smiled at us graciously and we felt not at ease, but eager. At the

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restaurant all went well at first. We began with cantaloupe and raspberry vinegar. Then I said: "Broiled live lobster." Mrs. Owen Jones Wister raised her eyebrows. No, she couldn't do that. Did we know how they were prepared? They were kept for days and days on ice and then broiled alive over a slow flame. She belonged to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. She said it with the manner in which today she would have said: "I belong to the Society for the Preservation of Spanish Democracy." I felt then as I should feel now if I were to say in her presence: "I should like to eat a little Spanish baby." This is not irreverence. It was the way I felt. After that I would as soon have shown her the disemboweled sparrow hawk and the shite-poke as a little disemboweled baby. Everything — even the Philadelphia White Mountain cake — was lead within me. God knows I was grateful for her reticence when she put us on the train without any questions as to the contents of the straw basket.

I never really intended to be a naturalist. There was little purpose or direction back of my scientific excursions, but apart from stimulating an intimacy with nature, which still grows with the years, natural history had its lessons to teach, some burlesque and others cruel or beautiful to a degree fantastic. Nothing could ever quite rival the breath-taking miracle of the greater moths, the luna, the polyphemus and the Atticus cecropia, as they split through the chrysalis and emerged from the cocoon, weak and quivering in the rainbow shimmer of their radiance. I had many of them in boxes covered with gauze about my room. I could guess the hour of parturition to a nicety by the quivering of the chrysalis, the infinitely delicate cracking, ripping and tearing of the cocoon, the throbbing and convulsions of this resurrection into life of a thing long dead. It was as if the womb gave birth to the life of which it was a part; it was the living bird rising from dead ashes.

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Once I hovered over a caterpillar, which had started to spin its cocoon. As the larva flung its head from side to side, as if manipulating a shuttle of fine silk, its back was suddenly alive with infinitesimal threadlike worms that jerked their way about, digging, wriggling, plunging from the living flesh of the caterpillar. The latter seemed sick unto death and swayed and curled up and hung, unable to shake off these tiny parasites. They in their turn were weaving their minute baskets, settling down to their long sleep, oblivious in their egotistic rapacity of the rent flesh which they had devoured. The ichneumon-fly had deposited its eggs by the score on the back of the caterpillar and the larvæ had emerged, fattened on their prey, ready to fulfill their destiny of sleep, concupiscence, procreation and death. Nothing hereafter in the struggle of life, on the battlefields of France, in the sadistic diabolism of Europe's petty monsters, filled me with as much horror as this little encounter with the ichneumon.

These and many other petty adventures — adventures with fire and water, with gun and knife, with horse, with dog, with bird or butterfly, with great lady, nursery-governess or witch — are the scattered and unrelated incidents, mishaps and hazards, insignificant and without pattern or principle, which, woven together in glowing tapestry of *mille fleurs*, form the saga, the background, the matrix of a growing child. It is not my purpose to draw from this tapestry of a thousand flowers — which to me are bright but which to another may lack odor and sparkle — some design or moral, or even some point of comparison. It is merely to present the not unusual background of a fairly normal boy of our generation.

Groton School

1898-1904

In any and all its forms, the boy detested school, and the prejudice became deeper with years. He always reckoned his school days, from ten to sixteen years old, as time thrown away.

*The Education of Henry Adams*¹

I HAD had four happy years at Haverford School when it was decided, upon due consultation, that my education could be improved — intellectually, morally, physically, socially — by the benefits of a New England boarding-school. I had actually been withdrawn on account of delicate health from Haverford the previous spring, and was studying painting in Philadelphia with a young graduate of the Pennsylvania Academy. I rode in each morning to Overbrook, where I left Manners at a livery stable and did the rest of the trip by train. My mother felt that thus she was killing two birds with one stone. I got my daily stint of exercise, and my enforced vacation from school might be used to explore a possibly hidden talent. Father had apparently regretted at times not being an artist. My mother played with the thought that, if a serious profession would prove too much for my physique — which was always showing signs of cracking up — the career of a landscape painter was a thoroughly healthy one and an admittedly reputable calling.

Under this treatment my health improved and the following

¹ Houghton Mifflin Company.

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autumn I was yanked away from my oil paints and lead soldiers, my shotgun, cricket bats, birds' eggs, butterflies, bicycles, fishing tackle, white mice, Belgian hares, stuffed birds, dogs and ponies, and sent up to the Reverend Endicott Peabody's school at Groton, Massachusetts, where my elder brother had already preceded me. Here I stayed for five years and another six at Harvard and the Harvard Law School. During those eleven years in New England I tried hard to conform to type, but always felt myself something of a stranger. I was ambitious and wanted to measure up to standard. Certainly from my own point of view I never succeeded. I might have been a failure anywhere and perhaps the chill of the New England temperament was a useful discipline.

Endicott Peabody was possibly as radical an influence on secondary education in 1890 as City and Country and the Walden Schools of the succeeding generation. There is, however, this difference: They had their roots in the thought-mechanism of Freud and in Dewey's pragmatic psychology. He modeled his school on an educational system stemming from the Middle Ages. Probably Mr. Peabody's most radical innovation was the attempt to break down on various fronts the wall which since the days of Pierre Abelard had separated boys and masters. He changed this relation by grafting on to the American school system certain traditions of the English public schools, modified in the light of New England idealism and of his own spiritual purity. The second great innovation of the Rector — as we called him — was the introduction of the honor system, which might be thus defined: In a few instances, conceded by all as essential to the welfare of the school and to the boy's own happiness — such for instance as not smoking, or drinking during the holidays, telling the truth, not going out of bounds at night — the boy undertook his own self-discipline; and if he broke such a pledge would probably be considered not a fit subject to continue at the school. A code is never rational, but religious; in that it is

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based upon faith and blind acceptance. Mr. Peabody was a generation ahead of his times in making the honor system between boy and master — as likewise between master and boy — part of the boy's own code of honor.

The third innovation which Mr. Peabody grafted on to the New England school system was a modification and combination of the English fag and hazing traditions. At Groton there was no straight fagging by a younger for an older boy. The Rector probably realized the incitement to homosexuality in such a relation. A boys' boarding-school, as such, is homosexual in tendency. This tendency can be promoted by the English fag system or reduced to a minimum as it was at Groton. Neither was there group hazing, and there was little individual bullying — the ferocious and junglelike joy of the older and stronger in humiliating and torturing the younger and weaker. Hazing and fagging were in a sense combined in a certain regimented hierarchic disciplining of the younger by the older boys.

Off the athletic field one never associated with the members of an upper or lower form, even in the case of a brother or close friend. Such an association at any rate was ground for the deepest suspicion. If one associated by habit with older or younger boys, it was ground for disciplinary action. If a younger boy met an older boy on the narrow boardwalk between Brooks and Hundred House, the younger stepped off into the snow. If younger boys failed to attend the football games of a Saturday afternoon, or to participate with sufficient enthusiasm in the regimented cheering, there was ground for very severe disciplining. An older boy might pull the cap off a new "kid," or trip him up in the mud if he showed underwear beneath his football trousers. There were in fact numberless small tokens, each in itself most insignificant, but which in the aggregate very sharply defined a "Grotty," and marked him off from all other American schoolboys to the outsider, but more especially in his own self-esteem. To others we might seem a little different. We knew

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that we moved in a world apart — and always, of course, in a world above.

Here are some of these subtle, almost Masonic marks of distinction. We always dressed for supper, that is put on a white shirt and black pumps; and the younger boys wore Eton collars in the evening and on Sundays. We spoke of Mr. Peabody as the Rector — which to me has a distinctly British ring. In the winter we played the English game of “fives,” rather than squash rackets or the more plebeian hand ball. So in cheer-leading, instead of sounding off with a “one, two, three — hurrah, etc.,” it was always “hip, hip — hurrah,” and this as far as I know is unique in America. The school was divided not into “classes” but into “forms”; and we never greeted each other with “Hello,” if we met on the campus, but always with “Hi.” “Hello” marked a boy at once as being a little city-schoolish. It was bad form — though not forbidden — to wear a cap; not to take a cold shower before breakfast; to swear or talk smut. A younger boy might easily have been disciplined by the older forms for dirty talk. I actually forgot the meanings, before I left school, of most of the one-syllabled words that Phil had taught me. Of course it was forbidden — not only by the upper-formers but by the Rector — to substitute tennis or golf for the major sports. We had to play football and baseball, no matter how thoroughly we disliked them and how indifferently we played, unless the doctor actually forbade it.

This Groton code, snobbish rather than military, precise rather than regimented, socially conservative rather than actually hostile to scholarship, was based on the mutuality of respect for the rights of the younger as well as of the older; and it was seldom necessary to resort to physical discipline. Two or three times a year there was a pumping. The sixth form met in the Senior Prefect's study and discussed the offense in camera. The Rector was informed of the Form's decision. He had, I suppose, some veto prerogative and in a measure he entered into the ritual. Usually after evening prayers in the Hundred House School

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Room the Rector would dismiss the school. But on these occasions the Senior Prefect stepped to the desk and rang the gong to keep the boys seated, while Mr. Peabody walked out with his Bible and prayer book. The fourth form, big strapping fellows, one or two of whom played on the football team, ran out into the hall and closed the large double doors. The Senior Prefect said in measured tones, no less terrifying than would be those of the Grand Inquisitor to a condemned heretic: "I want to see so-and-so in my study."

In the ensuing stillness time seemed suspended. If anyone took his eyes from his desk lid he did it covertly. The offender, most likely a new boy who failed to respond to the niceties of the school code, had to walk through that silence and out to meet, as best he could, what he knew was coming to him. The school remained seated. The heaviest of the fourth-formers — perhaps a dozen of them — grabbed the offender, jerked him off the ground and ran him down the cellar stairway to the lavatories in approved football rush. Certain others stood at strategic positions to hold open a door or to deflect an oncoming rush. Over the lavatory faucet a fourth-former sat with a stop watch. A first offender was only given about ten seconds. The water came from the open spigot with tremendous force and the stream could be concentrated in violence by thumb and forefinger. Besides the culprit was winded and frightened and held upside down during the pumping. He was being forcibly drowned for eight or ten seconds. Then he was jerked to his feet, coughing, choking, retching. He was asked if he understood why he was being pumped. It wasn't hazing, remember, it was discipline. If he hadn't had enough the first time he was put under again for ten seconds. When it was all over he was allowed to go up to his cubicle and change his clothes before returning to the school-room.

No one asked questions. One felt it prudent to mind one's own business.

While I was in the fourth form we pumped little Teddy

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Roosevelt, then in the second. It was not that he had committed any specific breach of the school code. He was selected, after a rather vehement debate and several consultations with the Senior Prefect, as the most typical of the form, the general tone of which we disapproved. He was held under twice for eight seconds. One of the form leaders then explained to him that he was fresh and swell-headed. To our amazement he denied everything, answered back, even started asking all sorts of questions. Little Teddy was quite voluble and our fourth-form leader was not so quick on the trigger under cross-examination.

"He was very plucky and began answering back. Shouts arose: 'Shut up! Under again. Shut him up! Under with him!' Most were for pumping him a third time but he was let off. It will do him and the whole form, whose tone is very fresh, a lot of good. Others are likely to follow his example. There was much loud talking in Brooks House schoolroom afterwards." So I recorded my feelings at the time, obviously upset that the third-formers should talk loudly about such a matter. I fancy, however, that the tone of the second form improved, for I cannot recall any subsequent pumpings that season. Little Teddy would have been about fourteen years old. This was on February 11, 1901. His father was inaugurated as vice-president some three weeks later.

Another season we pumped the Rector's son, Malcolm, recently elected Bishop Coadjutor of New York. Nor had he committed any specific breach of school code. We just didn't like his "tone," either; and it was definitely important to keep the tone of the lower forms up to Groton standard. The Rector was splendid about it. He certainly could take it on the chin.

During my first few weeks at school I was harassed by two continued obsessions: the fear of bed-wetting, and the fear that the boys or masters would discover a small box of lead soldiers

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that Francis had persuaded me to smuggle up to school, as a further toughening experience for them.

My first meeting with the Rector was a purely formal one but I have occasion to remember it. That week I was given twenty-two blackmarks. A usual allowance for a healthy-spirited boy would be three or four a week. Six was the maximum number that could be given for an offense. The record up to that moment had been perhaps a dozen.

The Rector read off the list of blackmarks Saturday noon after lunch. I was already somewhat nervous but when he reached my name on the school list and paused a long minute, scowling, without pronouncing it, I was really jittery. At length he looked up slowly, searching me out, and said:

"Biddle, go to my study."

As I worked my way clumsily forward between the rows of desks, I could not in sheer nervousness take my eyes off his angry stare. What had at first been a smile of frightened deprecation grew into a yawning rictus of despair. As I approached his desk, my eyes still on his, I was grinning, in sheer horror, from ear to ear.

When he came into his study a little later, he looked down at me not unkindly.

"George," he said, "if I had not known you were such a good boy, I should have sent you home long ago."

From then on I have never lost my respect for the Rector, and if I have understood him as little, I suppose, as he has understood me, I have always coveted his approbation. It was little Averell Harriman who once said of him to his father:

"You know he would be an awful bully if he weren't such a terrible Christian."

There you have the man in all his grandeur!

Years later he told me how at the very start Moncure also had vanquished him. Moncure's knife previously had been con-

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fiscated for playing with it in Sacred Studies. Subsequently in one week he had committed so many breaches of school regulations that the Rector felt it opportune to "take him on" alone for a talk. He there administered — he assured me — the most completely devastating and angry lecture he was capable of; and Mr. Peabody was a master in the art of exhortation and invective. Having shouted at Moncure for ten minutes, his eyes flashing, his lip flecked with indignation, he leaned back for a moment to catch his breath; and Moncure, patiently waiting for this split second in which to wedge into the conversation and get going on another topic, leaned forward and pointing to the Rector's desk said:

"Oh, look, Mr. Peabody, there's my knife!"

It is true that I usually headed my form, but I frequently headed the lists of latenesses and blackmarks as well. The Rector's hopes of me seemed doomed to disappointment.

In a letter to my mother, dating I should suppose from the same troubled period, I find this somewhat ambiguous passage:

I had a rather serious time this afternoon with Mr. Abbott [the same choleric, broad-shouldered, thick-set, one-hundred-eighty-pounds-stripped Mr. Abbott who had played on the Christ's College, Cambridge, soccer eleven, and who later became headmaster of Lawrenceville]. He gave me six blackmarks [the limit] because I told him in front of the entire school that I thought him very unfair. The Rector, with whom I later discussed the matter, explained to me that obedience comes before all else; and that one must not call masters names unless they ask one's opinion. I have been getting too many blackmarks lately. I must do better.

The Rector was always patient with me. Never really angry. And he seems to have made his points very clearly: — "First of all obedience . . . Wait until they ask one's opinion." Very military advice and it stood me in good stead subsequently in the army.

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Mr. Abbott, too, who had shouted so loudly at me before the whole school: "Biddle, I am not accustomed to being called unfair and dishonest!" turned out perhaps my warmest friend among the faculty. He tried for several years to convert me to Christian Science; and only lost his temper once again when I broke his nose — quite inadvertently — trying indeed to escape his bull-like rushes as we sparred together one rainy afternoon in the gymnasium.

These years at school I was hungry for success. It may not have been ambition at all, merely a desperate, shielding effort to conform to type. To succeed at Groton, as later at Harvard, three paths lay open: athletics, social success and administrative ability. At sixteen years I weighed ninety-six pounds, was the smallest boy in my form and had no unusual aptitude for games. I was socially undeveloped, though never strictly unpopular. It took me about twelve years of failure to convince myself that I did not possess outstanding administrative ability. About the only thing left was scholarship. Mr. Peabody is not a scholar himself. He is a great administrator and a militant Christian. I should define his Christianity as an unshaken faith in his particular God and a fervent wish to keep physically fit, sexually clean, morally honest and — in every sense of the word — a gentleman. I fancy he dislikes a dirty collar as violently as a dirty word; and is shocked by an East Side accent as well as by outspoken Atheism.

It is true that the Rector wanted his boys to excel in scholarship — as in athletics, moral purity, clean living and manliness — and the school got a half holiday every time that Bayard Cutting was awarded a John Harvard Scholarship. So I pinned my ambition on the hopes of being head of my class. When he read out the marks at the end of the month I was always afraid that the tears might come to my eyes if I were unsuccessful. I would lift up my desk lid at the approach of my name, as if in search of something or other. I had not yet learned that one cannot get

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through life without a mask. It is just as important — more so perhaps — than a face.

In my third-form year I used to walk over from the School House to the Hundred House at morning recess to get fattened up on an egg-milk-shake and crackers. Daily for several months I met there one of the sixth-formers. Sometimes we walked together back to the School House. He was gray-eyed, cool, self-possessed, intelligent; and had the warmest, most friendly and understanding smile. Years later he told me he had been ill with scarlet fever. He had lost weight and the doctors seemed to think he should fatten up a bit. Though he was not athletic — perhaps because he was not an outstanding athlete — he seemed from my point of view all the more successful. He was — as I remember — manager of the school football team, head editor of the *Grotonian* and a prefect. I was rather surprised, then, to hear quite recently from a close friend of his that Franklin Roosevelt had always felt at Groton that he was unsuccessful and had not attained the prestige that he would have liked.

It was my fortune to get an occasional glimpse of another boy two forms below me, who was to become — in my estimation at least — the only other pre-eminent Groton graduate, also, curiously enough, a politician and a statesman. Bronson Cutting's reputation at Groton had in a way preceded him. His elder brother Bayard, shortly thereafter to die of consumption in Florence, had been such a brilliant scholar that much was expected of Bronson. When, then, the Rector, after one of his studied and dramatic pauses, early in November read out Cutting's first month's mark — which was so close to absolute perfection, so immeasurably above what we ordinary bright boys had been reaching after — there was an intaking of breath and whispered exclamations ran about the school. All eyes turned on the new boy, who huddled among the first-formers, gray-faced, spotted, sparrow-boned, a mere breath or shell of a human

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being. I used to come across him often in the school library. It was once discovered that his name only was on the index card of an eight-volumed history, entitled *The Lives of the Saints*. I wonder indeed if any other name was ever spelled out below his own threadlike, angular, delicate and scrawling handwriting. He, too, was head editor of the *Grotonian*.

A few months ago at a gathering at the Whitney Museum, being told that Mrs. W. Bayard Cutting was present, I introduced myself to her, telling her how little I had known her son but what a vast admiration I had for his liberal-mindedness, his valiant fight against reaction and his deep intelligence. She told me that Bronson had also felt himself a failure at school, unable to compete in athletics, so delicate that he gave the impression of a cripple; but that when he was elected head editor of the *Grotonian* he had written her: "You may not know it, but I believe today that I am the happiest human being in all America."

I am always skeptical about offering advice on any subject to anyone; because the advice may be wrong and I know it will not be heeded. If I ever should offer advice, however, it would be predicated on this general experience. As I look back on life I find that I have done a few things of which I am proud and a good many more of which I am heartily ashamed, but do not regret, however. My only regrets are the failures to act on impulse. It is the things one could have done and didn't which are the lost opportunities. Sometimes, however, genuine shame lingers.

My first year at school my brother Moncure was in the fourth form and had a study in the Hundred House. At that time he was a particularly lonely boy and yearned for companionship and affection. At moments I was homesick, myself. Rainy afternoons he would have me to his study, prepare me a cup of hot chocolate, make me comfortable on the couch with Mallory's *Morte d'Arthur* or T. W. Arnold's translation of the *Fioretti* of St.

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Francis. He busied himself making a fair copy of a "Life of Oliver Cromwell," which he was preparing as his English prize essay. Mellow Indian summer afternoons he would walk me down to the village, buying fresh cider or apples along the way. At the close of the football season we paddled up the green windings of the Dead River on the Nashua or knocked balls about the golf course. We were closer together that autumn than at any time since. One day I noticed, meeting a group of fourth-formers on the way up from the boathouse, that they nudged one another and snickered as we passed. It was the same with my own form. They felt that we were "queer." One doesn't associate with an older brother. After that I kept away from him.

This isn't a pretty thing to tell. It's the ugliest indictment I have against Groton; this and the school's intellectual dishonesty.

One summer years later at Bermuda I had been reading Renan's *Life of Christ* and Tom Paine's *Age of Reason*. I said to William Norman Guthrie:

"Paine shows inconsistencies and contradictions, not through extradocumentary testimony but through the very words of Moses or of Christ and his Apostles. If the Old or the New Testament is the supreme evidence, then it only proves that one cannot believe it."

He answered: "The amazing thing is not that the testimony, taken by word of mouth over a period of centuries, is conflicting and contradictory. That one assumes. It is a miracle that in so many instances it corroborates the most trivial events."

I said to him: "I studied Sacred Studies for six years at Groton. I never heard of Renan or of Tom Paine; and I was never told that the Old and the New Testament are full of the most patent contradictions."

These are my indictments against Groton. Its effect was to stifle the creative impulse. Its code could tolerate a feeling of shame for associating with one's brother; and by and large, in





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many small ways, it was intellectually dishonest. In other respects the school was admirable.

I was on the edge of a nervous breakdown. I was about to be confirmed, and in an ecstasy of religious emotion attended the Rector's confirmation talks and made synopses of his exhortations.

February 5, 1901 — Mr. Peabody spoke about renunciation. There are three kinds. First, renounce things which are absolutely wrong; then things which harm yourself; lastly things which harm others. He then spoke of the devil as a subtle spirit. His temptations are pride, irreverence, swearing, telling religious funny stories, and praying only with the lips. The text for the week is: "Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."

The reading is: St. John, First Epistle, Second chapter; and Ephesians, Chapter IV, line 17, to Chapter V, line 21.

February 14. The Rector spoke about Gambling, Drinking and Impurity. There are two ways of legitimately spending one's money. First, spending it and getting something for it. Then giving it away. Never tell an unclean story or allow one to be told in your presence. The reading for the week is . . .

I was never particularly religious, but during these pitiful years of adolescence, when my hopes, my convictions, the world itself, seemed shattering about me, I wanted something to which I could cling or drown myself in absolute faith and exaltation.

At sixteen I was still sexually undeveloped and completely innocent. I doubt very much if I had ever heard of self-abuse. The boys' habits were very intelligently — at any rate methodically — dealt with. Several of the masters worked through the prefects and older boys. These in turn would select one of the maturer members of an adolescent group, talk with him very sanely and honestly, and ask his advice about contacting other younger boys in his group. Howard Cary, who was a prefect and

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sixth-former, had been told that I was probably ripe material for such friendly admonition and advice.

One May evening he asked if he might walk with me back to Brooks House after evening prayers. I was wallowing in a state of gloom and self-criticism. Such a request from an upper-former was most unusual, and I wondered darkly what was in store for me. He showed me the greatest warmth and affection, however, put his arm about my shoulder, spoke of my studies and asked me what books I had been reading. As we wandered up and down together through the apple orchard, the silver blossoms crepuscular in the rising darkness, my heart beat fast, so brimming over in happiness that I thought it would burst. Finally in parting he held my hand and said:

"If ever you want a friend, if ever you have need of unburdening yourself, if ever you are ashamed of something, so ashamed that you cannot face it in your own thoughts, then come to me. Perhaps I can help. Perhaps I can be that older friend to you."

Tears hung in my eyes and throat. That such an important and successful boy should care that way about me! For the following term or so I was literally in love with him, and did not for several years suspect the nature of his mission.

In the autumn of 1901 I was taken away from school for a year and sent to California. In eight months I grew nearly the same number of inches and put on twenty pounds' weight. I minded terribly being dropped a class. I felt disgrace in it. On my return to school my old form was now the sixth and I never quite knew to what extent to associate with my former classmates or to identify myself with the new form. I was not kept long in uncertainty as to the correct social attitude.

The Senior Prefect asked me one evening to come to his study. The whole sixth form was there. I was told by him that I should have known better than to associate with an upper form. Did I think myself too good for the fifth? Did I think the sixth-formers

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needed me or took any pleasure in my company? They would tell me frankly how much they appreciated my importunities. They then proceeded to rough me up. I fought as long as I could. I am ashamed of myself for not trying to kill someone. I was one against twenty and saw two friendly faces. My clothes were ripped off. I was thrown out of the window and my effects bundled after me.

Next day after chapel I stepped up to the sixth-form leader, whom I considered most responsible, and told him I wanted a word with him. We walked down toward the river. At the end of a few moments I was choking with anger and humiliation. I told him what I felt about the lot of them.

"I thought my old form were my friends. I see I was mistaken. I can get along without you all as easily as you without me. If you didn't like my society you need only have told me so. That would have been fair play. You didn't have to take me on, one against twenty."

He was not at all impressed by my vehemence and looked very bored and severe. After all it was a question of school code and discipline. He was evidently shocked by all this show of emotion. He was quite right. I should have taken him aside and tried to kill him; or else taken it on the chin and said nothing about it. Later this boy, who was very popular at school and at Harvard, committed suicide.

I got through the next two years all right. Off and on I headed my form. I was an editor of the *Grotonian*. I rowed on a school four. I knew I was a failure. I was liked well enough. I was never entirely defeated. I knew Groton was the finest school in America; I knew that being a failure was my own fault. I knew that I was a happy fellow to be there. I was that low. Life had compensations. Here are random extracts from my diary.

April 4, 1901 — Learn to play "Marching through Georgia" on a fife I bought for 75 cents from Louis Chapin.

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May 2 — I now know all nine of the fife marches, three hymns and "Clementine." Vice-President Roosevelt came up today and our drum and fife corps gave him a reception. At half past five he gave us a bully talk about . . . shooting panthers in the Rockies. Among other episodes were the stories of the fellow who shot the editor and got off for thirty days; the man who missed his wife and shot the lady . . . the man who was accused by his mother-in-law of polygamy.

May 19 — Sit beside an old farmer at the May Services in Groton. He told me he was in the Civil War; and his father in the War of 1812, and saw Washington.

September 27, 1903 — According to Franklin Roosevelt [down from Harvard for a talk to the editors of the *Grotonian*] it must be beastly hard trying for the *Crimson*. Two days a week from 4 P.M. 'til 2 A.M.

March 9, 1904 — I preach a sermon at the Boston Road [social service work among the outlying villages], as none of the masters are able to. I interpolate into the First Book of Samuel a text of my own. I also make use of quotations from Cicero, the Greek, and the "Fioretti" of St. Francis. There were about sixteen present. Good fun but dreadfully cold.

March 29 — . . . I have decided to do several things this term. To get "A" every month. I cannot, alas! beat G. Howe, as there are but two months before Prize-Day. I am also going to try to broaden and expand my chest, sit up straight, and keep my digestion in order. These are minor things but they all help to broaden my character.

April 4 — I preach a second sermon, at Rocky Hill this time. There are thirty-two present, but they are more condescending than last time. One fat girl in particular drove me nearly crazy. I had to repeat the same sermon as I had only ten minutes in which to prepare it.

. . . The Rector never seems interested in me or anything I am saying. I am afraid I shall have to give him up.

May 7 — Stokes is annoying. [He was subsequently to become Herbert Hoover's private secretary and an editor of the *Herald Tribune*.] He started on the Latin prize — over which I must have spent forty hours — three days before the time limit. I have a haunt-

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ing certainty that he will get it, too. Of the Greek prize and of one of the debating and form prizes I feel pretty certain.

May 14 — I am again moved up — I am sorry to say — to Mr. Peabody's table.

Tonight I asked Mr. Peabody if I might sit at a lower table for another month. He looked at me without cracking a smile and then said slowly: "You mean that you prefer THOSE tables to OURS?" I had never looked at it in this light, and he quite flabbergasted me. So I only said "Yes." I gained my point for the next month, however.

May 23 — . . . Then came the races. Our crew raced first against a graduate boat of F. D. Roosevelt, stroke; H. Peabody, three; Cross, two; and Hollister, bow. As there was some fear of George Howe's fainting, the race was started at the boat-house. The grads were given half a length. Though our stroke was short and choppy, we pulled right away from them and kept three lengths' lead all the way. George came off his seat four times; Stokes and I did once.

May 24 — Prize Day. President Roosevelt spoke after the Rector. As usual he spoke on the strenuous life; snobbishness at college, etc. He emphasizes his *ands* and *ifs* too much and gesticulates rather freely. He was a come-down after the Rector's straightforward speaking.

Then the prizes were given out. I got the prize for the best debate, the second form prize, and the Greek prize. Schenck got the essay prize; B. Cutting, the Latin. George Howe got the first form prize and Stokes the English prize. What pleased me most was that Francis got the prize for the best two-minute speech. When the President shook hands he said: "It isn't fair, you Biddle boys are getting all the prizes." . . . I drove down with Stokes, Kissel and Derby to the Rocky Hill Service. I preached a sermon on: "If ye have faith ye can move mountains," and "That which ye sow, ye reap."

After evening service I lay in the shadow of the chapel and thought over my school career. . . . I may not have made a success of my school life, but I would not have missed Groton for anything.

I cannot feel that Groton had much to teach me. One can suppose that its effect would be to smother — for a time at least —

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the creative spirit in the growing boy. Can one even be sure that it was of much positive educational value in the careers and the flowering of B. M. Cutting or of F. D. Roosevelt? But I am far from sure that education elsewhere would have been of more value. For I learned this thing in Groton and in the subsequent five or six years at Harvard: that I heartily loathed not necessarily the standard which the Rector with all his fire and purity held out to his boys but the standard which through some sort of social preoccupation the great majority of his boys had elected to follow.

Ninety-five percent of these boys came from what they considered the aristocracy of America. Their fathers belonged to the Somerset, the Knickerbocker, the Philadelphia or the Baltimore Clubs. Among them was a goodly slice of the wealth of the nation, little Morgans, Harrimans, Whitneys, Webbs, McCormicks, Crockers, Stillmans. On the whole the equipment and the teaching were more admirable than at any other school in America.

Generally speaking, this aristocracy, this wealth, this admirable educational training was destined to flow into one channel: Wall Street or its equivalent. There were of course exceptions. Of the fifty-six members of my two Groton forms the names of seven have even been listed in *Who's Who in America*. A greater number, however, could, in terms purely of manhood, be listed as absolute failures: parasites on the community, cheats, drunkards, lechers, panhandlers, suicides. This is not entirely — considering the investment in money, in zeal, in single-mindedness, in purity — a successful experiment. Is it the educational system or the material — the social and financial aristocracy of America — that is responsible?

Not so long ago I attended at the Union Club on Park Avenue and 69th Street a dinner given by the graduates to commemorate the happy and complete recovery of Mr. Peabody from a long and serious illness. He was approaching his eighty-first birthday. I had not seen him for twenty-seven years. He had changed singularly

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little. His hair grayer; his face less pink and white. But he had the same vitality, the same clear eye, the same indestructible dominance and untiring energy. He looked more than ever like some splendid eleventh or twelfth-century Crusader; the militant Christian, half warrior, half priest. He spoke for an hour, with the occasional use of a note, and during that hour held all of us in the hollow of his hand. He was the father; we, his boys. There was much easy wise-cracking — as of old — and much reassuring statistical proof of the high standing of recent classes at Harvard, at Yale and at Princeton. He spoke about purity in the home and said that home life and purity were at the basis of our civilization. The audience responded with laughter or applause. Then the Rector spoke to this effect:

“Something has troubled me a good deal lately. Personally I don’t pretend to know much about politics or economics. [A little ripple of gaiety spread among us.] But in national crises like the present one, we get pretty excited and perhaps we give vent to expressions that later on we are sorry for. I believe Franklin Roosevelt to be a gallant and courageous gentleman. I am happy to count him as my friend.”

There was complete silence.

Now the dramatic meaning of this incident was *not* that the school was completely hostile to Mr. Peabody in his loyalty to perhaps the most popular president since Washington, to one of the half-dozen admittedly most important people in the world today, and to the only pre-eminent living Grotonian. It was rather — if I analyzed the Groton mind correctly — that they were silenced for a moment in admiration at his courage in thus daring, at a completely friendly, family meeting, to step into the breach and alone undertake to defend the President. I take it that what ran through their minds was something like this: “Good old Rector! By Jove he has nerve. And perhaps — after all — he may be partly right. Perhaps we should not *talk* the way we do. Not in public. Not of a fellow Grotonian.”

Mr. Peabody is a somewhat great man, whom I find incom-

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patible with my own conception of the adequate. It was Delacroix who said to his students, as they filed by Ingres's *Odalisque* in the Louvre:

"Messieurs, *le chapeau dans la main mais les yeux fixés à terre* — gentlemen, it has my admiration, but don't let it get you."

Our last serious correspondence was based on an episode bordering upon pure fantasy. One summer during the law school, cruising with my friend Harold Wilcox from Dark Harbor to Northeast, in an old Friendship lobster boat, we passed through the twinkling islands, the overhanging firs and the red and blue granite ledges of Fox Island Thoroughfare; and dropped anchor in North Haven, the Rector's summer home. That evening we invited on board my brother Francis and other younger college friends. As the night air was chilly we closed down the hatches and sat about a ship's lantern well into the night, yodeling, singing, shouting and plying our guests alternately with semi-fermented beer and straight whiskey.

At two in the morning we shook hands all around, swallowed a half tumbler of scratch-gut, and waved a lantern to them as they zigzagged their way through the lobster pots and North Haven dinghies to the dock. In ten minutes we were fast asleep. Two of our guests, less sober than we had realized, felt the need of extending their whimsies to the threshold of the Rector's home. There, under his window and up and down the silent, Sabbath streets, they impersonated in a two-hour dialogue, and well into the dawn, Mr. Peabody himself, and his lifelong collaborator Amory Gardner, shrieking, arguing, swearing, cursing at each other in language that echoed from one end of the village to the other.

Harold and I had the anchor up by dawn and were tacking close to the wind and well out of the harbor. We were unaware that warrants were sworn out for our arrest and that actions for dis-

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orderly conduct, public nuisance, etc., were pending against our guests. By the following mail, however, I got a letter from Mr. Peabody. It began by asking why I had singled out his summer home and Sunday evening as the site and occasion of drunkenness, bawdy language and blasphemy; and ended with a regret that my younger brother should be subjected to the influence of my company the summer before his last school year. I explained things a little — little by little — and Mr. Peabody forgave. On September twenty-second he wrote again:

“ . . . Francis and I went over the ground very thoroughly and, if he reported to you the conversation which we had, there would be little more to add. It was unfortunate all around, but we must now leave it behind.”

Pierre de Chaignon LaRose tells this story of him. One evening when he had business in Boston he telephoned or wrote to one of “his boys” suggesting that he visit him that evening in his college club, the Gas House. When Mr. Peabody arrived the undergraduates were sitting about drinking orange juice and tea, and talking about Professors Royce and Münsterberg and James and Santayana. They asked Mr. Peabody about life in English universities and ordered more orange juice, and talked about Professors Palmer and Copeland and Kittredge. Mr. Peabody went home and felt that the influence of his boys had done something to change the tone in Harvard University. About midnight the Owl Club telephoned over to the Gas and said: “What the hell was all the noise about?” and the Gas said: “Hell, nothing. Dr. Peabody has been spending the evening with us. Come on over and celebrate, too. Later on others joined in. About three o’clock, the Gold Coast Clubs were still snake-dancing up and down Mt. Auburn Street and pulling up signposts and shooting siphons of club soda at the street-car conductors. Pierre laughed his rich, saturnine chuckle:

“Yes, that’s the influence the Grotties have on Harvard!”

California

1901-1902

Here was the spot where that grand old Franciscan, Padre Junipero Serra, began his work, full of the devout and ardent purpose to reclaim the wilderness and its people to his country and his Church; on this very beach he baptized his first Indian converts, and founded his first Mission. And the only traces now remaining of his heroic labors and hard-won successes were a pile of crumbling ruins, a few old olive trees and palms; and in less than another century even these would be gone; returned into the keeping of that mother, the earth, who puts no headstones at the sacredness of her graves.

HELEN HUNT JACKSON: *Ramona*

IF SOME proper evaluation of the benefit to one's growth and character were possible — as I believe it never is — or if we could measure the degree to which we have found life ripely blooming and sucked it dry — as I believe we always can in the bright satisfaction of our memory — then the eleven years' schooling in New England and at Harvard seem in retrospect eleven years of retardation of growth. The memories which throb with the quickened pulse of life's adventure are of those two years away from schooling and New England for reasons of ill health. Later in Tahiti I learned — or rather I severely drilled and compelled myself to observe — the absolute necessity for an artist to keep life at arm's length, to see it objectively. One could only savor its beauty — the beauty was there — if one were not crushed by the ugliness of its little unimportant impacts; if it were not on top of one like a thousand fleas and cockroaches. A

California

sunset is always seen more glowingly upside down. One must strive to live in contrasts, in order to get the full appetite and flavor of life, to dwell largely in country solitude, partly because it is the good life, partly because it makes one ravenous for city crowds; always to drink a glass or so too deeply, because with proper drinking life is more rosy, and also because otherwise water before breakfast would never taste so sweet. Perhaps, then, the sojourn in California — and subsequently that in Mexico — seem such a gaily colored and vivid pattern because the years before and after were by comparison so gray, so flat, so lacking in resonance or sparkle.

That summer at Penllyn and in the neighborhood there had been a plague of basket worms and tent caterpillars. The trees were stripped completely bare of all their foliage. There followed early in October a long and mellow period of warmth and sun. The trees, as if bewildered, put on fresh leaves and many of the wild cherries burst into bloom.

My mother and I left Penllyn in October. Three days later the train ran westward through the flat and then the rolling prairies of Kansas. I saw prairie dogs standing stiff and intently curious before their holes. Motionless they blinked at us gliding by; and then, courtesying, dived below as if into a bomb-proof shelter. A coyote watched us, standing off in the long grass, one paw raised and crooked. We ran by the parched sand and zigzag bluffs of Colorado; Pike's Peak, Spanish Peaks and Raton Range. In Arizona and New Mexico the crazy red orange purple mountains were the right background for the lean long-horned steer, staring moodily under gray silver sycamores. Sometimes the cattle towns were nothing more than printed names on signposts, empty loading pens and many parallel tracks in the dust, vanishing toward the horizon. Roads would not come to that part of the West for another decade. Through the Mojave Desert I saw my first Indians and bargained with them for their pottery as

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the train pulled to a stop to take in water. In the Ojai Valley in California we paused from the long trip. I tasted guavas, soaked overnight in sugar. Down in Little Mexico I talked with the greasers. For six bits I bought a loaded quirt from one of them; and from another — a fat, one-legged cripple and stench of a man — an eight-strand, six-length, rawhide reata for a dollar and a half. The roads lay four or five inches deep in dust. The rains would not fall until Christmas. One day I caught a tarantula under my sombrero among some rotting oranges by the side of the road.

It is difficult to find words to express the sharpness of these impressions. They still have that immediacy which one associates with a dream a second or two before awakening. It seems trivial to say that I fell in love with California, yet this is the accurate way to describe my feelings. They clothed acts and situations in a mellow light and mood of intoxication, which one associates with calf love.

From this time on and for many years I had vivid, recurrent — almost serial — dreams about certain places. These existed only in my dreams; but I associated them with California — and subsequently with the Paris Latin Quarter, Tahiti, Croton. That is, in these recurrent dreams I did not exactly revisit my beloved California, but I would immediately recognize this fairy country — which I had known in a previous dream — and would feel for it the same bittersweet yearning which only California had evoked.

My mother finally settled me at San Ysidro above Montecito, south of Santa Barbara. It was a small orange ranch and Mr. Johnson, the proprietor, took in boarders. My best friend there was Carmen, a former Mexican vaquero and handy man about the ranch. He taught me how to throw a lariat — from the Spanish *la reata*, the rope. Sundays we went quail hunting up the cañon, to the forks and beyond to the falls. Once we drove in a dilapidated buggy to Carpinteria after kildeer and ringneck plover, divers and spoonbills.

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In the evenings I played my piccolo and read Helen Hunt Jackson's *Ramona*. *Ramona* was still alive, old and fat. Her colored postcard photographs were sold at the Harvey lunchcounters up and down the Sante Fe Railroad. When years later I learned from my friend Gardner Jackson in Washington that the author of my *Ramona* was not only his aunt but his father's first wife, I could only throw my arms about him and kiss his cheeks. *Ramona* and Fra Junipero Serra and Bret Harte's *California* lie buried deep, but they will never entirely be forgotten.

Carmen had a friend, Adolfo. He sold me for a couple of bits a flint spearhead which he had grubbed up in the Digger Indian mound at Montecito. It had been lodged in the neck bone of an Indian. Opposite the fine old tile-roofed Delaguerra mansion in Santa Barbara was a small curio store. In the very center of the shop window was the skull of a Digger Indian and in the skull was embedded an arrowhead. But it was priced at five dollars and although I drove my mother on several occasions to admire it she seemed curiously uninterested. My appetite was now, however, whetted. I asked Adolfo if he would go gravedigging with me. He was very much alarmed but I pestered him until he consented. We rode down to the beach one night and fastened our ponies to the branch of a pepper tree. He led me along the railroad track to the mound and there we waited until the moon was up. We dug for about an hour. I found a number of broken pestles and mortars and some babies' bones. I treasured them for months wrapped in cotton wool in an old pasteboard shoebox. My mother discovered them and explained to me the criminal nature of my act, and what might be the consequences. I somewhat reluctantly agreed to give the bones a second burial — in the shoebox — below Mr. Johnson's vegetable garden. I refused to part with the mortars and pestles.

Carmen had a face like a weasel, long, upflaring, mobile nose, close-set brown eyes, never at rest but flickering uneasily like tired butterflies; walrus mustache, receding chin. He wore dark incon-

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spicuous clothes, a soft black felt hat, a heavy gold watch chain and unpolished red leather shoes. He was the trickiest man with a rope I had ever seen. He taught me how to throw it eight different ways. Forehand or backhand; circling or at rest from the ground; the neck, the hind-leg and the three foreleg throws; loveliest and most difficult of all the throws, popularized by Will Rogers but known to every *jinete* — cavalier — south of the Rio Grande, where the noose is kept open after the cast by a circular motion of the wrist and then guided at will, not from the hand, but by the undulation imparted to the rope itself. He taught me how to mount a plunging horse by the left-hand cheek-strap hold, grabbing the left stirrup with the right hand, and not catching the pummel until the foot was safely in the stirrup and the body flung into the saddle by the jerked-sideways plunge of the horse. He showed me how to pick a cigarette from the ground at a full run, hooking the left spur behind the cantle and holding the pummel by the left hand; or, even if it were a sixteen-hand horse, clutching a loop of the reata well below the pummel, to which it was half-hitched. He showed me how to vault into the saddle with a grip on the stirrup leather; and how to shoot or rope in safety from the saddle. No wonder I loved Carmen. He was *muy amigo* — my good friend.

Carmen introduced me in Santa Barbara to Old Ortega and his nephew, El Piton — the Sprig. Ortega was old school Mexican. He trimmed his white beard short and parted it in the middle. He rode a small white cow pony with flowing mane and tail. He rode at a reined-in gallop with his gelding's ears almost over the withers, pawing the air in front. When he came to a stop he jerked on the spade bit, sat his horse on his hocks, and slid twenty feet in a cloud of dust. He used a split-ear bridle without any nosepiece, brow band or throat latch, eight-strand rawhide reins fastened with chains to the spade bit, and carried sixty feet of twelve-strand reata. Old Ortega wore a broad black felt sombrero. He understood English but spoke only Spanish. His skin

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continually burned as if by fever. He was very scornful and abusive of Americans — *los Gringos* — but accepted me on El Piton's recommendation — and because I was in the market for a cow pony.

El Piton belonged to a different generation. He spoke English pretty well and was a tough guy. He punched cattle out at the Catalina Islands or up at Gaviota. He traded horses and broke them in on the stretch of beach at the foot of Main Street in Santa Barbara. He dressed tough and talked tough and was free with his money; but he knew how to ride. Old Ortega saw to that.

I bought my cow pony, Chapo, from Old Ortega. He was a black *mesteño* — mustang — from Idaho, broken to shoot from the saddle and to rope. He was a cutter, that is he was trained to follow and cut out a marked steer from the herd, and was quick as a polo pony on his pivots. But he was a real loco, went crazy mad and bucked like a circus if anything unexpected happened. If you started to mount him from the wrong side, or double-cinched him, he bucked, squealing and snorting, with his ears back. If you entered his stall from behind he tried to kick the stall to pieces. I entered it over the manger and was in other matters circumspect. Chapo was the only animal I ever really loved. I fed him and groomed him every day. He, too, galloped pawing the air, with his ears well back over the withers. He maimed, temporarily, two or three stable boys while I owned him. Bob Miller, the Ojai Valley ranger, offered me ten dollars more than I paid for him and when I left California El Piton bought him back for twenty-five dollars. In subsequent years when I had my recurrent California dreams, Chapo was ever there. When I came to California I had a very small frame and was abnormally light. That year I grew about seven inches. But what was more important, securely seated on Chapo's back in the broad Mexican saddle, embellished with the hand-carved

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saddlebags, the gun case, lariat, the silver-studded martingale and horsehair hackamore, the leather-thonged tapaderas and other trappings, I grew tall and acquired weight in my own estimation.

One morning before daybreak Carmen and I joined Old Ortega, El Piton and the boys on the strip of beach below Santa Barbara, where they broke in the potros and potrancas — the colts and the three-year-old fillies. They had a mean time saddling a young sorrel. El Piton had roped him round the belly to get him used to the feel of the cinch. He was blindfolded and jerked about in a circle on the hackamore to take the buck out of him. The muscles played like ripples over his barreled flanks. He plunged about in the sand, reared, fell over backward, squealed, struck out with his forelegs. El Piton roped his right foreleg. Passing the rope over his withers, he drew it taut, hobbling the sorrel's foot fast under his belly. They finally got the double-cinched saddle squarely girthed. The sorrel — three-legged — lashed about and flung himself in the sand. When he was up again Old Ortega — to draw his attention — buffeted him noisily on the cheeks, standing well off from the forelegs. The rider climbed — very gently — into the saddle. The blinders were ripped off. The men shouted, jumped aside, and slapped their legs with their sombreros to get him to a run. There's no danger in a running buck, especially if the rider can keep the horse's head from between its legs. But the sorrel wouldn't play ball. He walked round on his hind legs for a minute or two and then fell over backwards and snapped the pummel clean. The rider got away.

I begged to mount him. Carmen had told me to watch how the mane would lead to left or right. One cannot gage the direction of the next plunge by the head, buried between the fore feet. While the boys got the sorrel freshly saddled, Old Ortega cautioned me to jump clean, if the horse somersaulted.

It wasn't so difficult after all. The sorrel reared a bit, bucked a couple of times and then somersaulted. I jumped clean, somer-

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saulted and rolled half a dozen lengths before I came to a stop. When I got on him again the fight was out of him. He bucked all right, but it was a loose, running buck. Old Ortega had the martingale rope wound round his own pummel, and kept jerking up on the chin. The boys galloped along behind, belaboring his flanks with their lariats. Two or three runs up and down the beach in the soft sand and even the gallop was beaten out of him.

One lives in such moments.

That spring, before I left California, I took part in a big rodeo on the Dibblee Ranch near Gaviota, north of Santa Barbara. I left San Ysidro at five o'clock in the morning and covered about forty-five miles in ten hours. We slept at the Mac Kneily ranch-house. It was a low clapboard affair, the porch high off the ground, inset and roofed over. It nestled under sycamores; and a white-washed picket fence straggled about the outbuildings. The ranch had fifty or sixty thousand acres of rolling grassland, with ideal *bajíos* — flats — for the herding and branding. The grassy hillocks were spotted with clumps of live oak. Mesquite and chaparral grew along the dry cañon beds. There were a couple of dozen vaqueros in the outfit and we herded four or five thousand head of cattle and branded and cut 550 in the three-day round-up. Old Ortega, Carmen and El Piton; Bascus, Vicente Gaverra, Del Vaya, Vacaro; and the three Americans, Johnny and Billy Beggs and Ed Mac Kneily are the names that stand out as heroes in my memory. At night, tired and dusty after twelve and fourteen hours in the saddle, we rode back to the Mac Kneily ranchhouse and supped on mountain oysters — calves' fries — scrambled eggs and black coffee. I rode Chapo fifty miles back to San Ysidro the day after the rodeo was ended. In addition to the actual roping and herding he had traveled upwards of 180 miles in five days. I gave him an extra measure of oats and a three-day rest. When I took him out again he started to buck on me. Was I proud of him! They don't breed them any more like my little Idaho loco.

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Socially or intellectually, the college was for him negative and in some ways mischievous. The most tolerant man of the world could not see good in the lower habits of the students, but the vices were less harmful than the virtues. The habit of drinking — though the mere recollection of it made him doubt his own veracity, so fantastic it seemed in later life — may have done no great or permanent harm; but the habit of looking at life as a social relation — an affair of society — did no good. It cultivated a weakness which needed no cultivation . . .

Luckily the old social standard of the college, as President Walker or James Russell Lowell still showed it, was admirable, and if it had little practical value or personal influence on the mass of students, at least it preserved the tradition for those who liked it. The Harvard graduate was neither American nor European, nor even wholly Yankee; his admirers were few, and his critics many; perhaps his worst weakness was his self-criticism and self-consciousness; but his ambitions, social or intellectual, were not necessarily cheap even though they might be negative.

Education of Henry Adams

IF IN retrospect Groton and the northern landscape of Massachusetts seem chilly and uncongenial, then the three years at Harvard College seem rather the challenge of a self-indictment. A New England boarding-school was emotionally thinner than a modern kindergarten, since it straitjacketed play and human feelings; and intellectually it was six hundred years behind the times, since it was avowedly medieval. But emotionally Harvard University in 1904 offered as wide a scope as the world outside it; with — one would suppose — the tremendous advantage that there was an implied guaranty of peace and

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happiness, or at least an implied insurance against war, starvation, sickness and death. Certainly in intellectual wealth the world's average made a sorry showing in comparison with the galaxy of brilliant men that were teaching then at Harvard. In philosophy, James, Santayana, Royce, Münsterberg and Palmer; in English, Kittredge, Barrett Wendell, Neilson, Perry and Copeland; in economics, Carver and Piatt Andrew, all lectured in the general undergraduate courses. Even in Fine Arts there was the white-haired and atrabilious Charles Moore, who so peevishly carried on the learning of Viollet-le-Duc and the scholarly aura of Charles Eliot Norton, who had been a friend of the great John Ruskin, who put, had he not, Joseph Mallord William Turner on the map, who was born in 1775 — even The Fine Arts Department carried on a tradition, though hardly one spelt in letters of contemporary painting.

The fault, then, was not with Harvard. There was plenty there if one had the intelligence to pick. It is true there was little compulsion from Dean Briggs's Office. One could stay out and drink all night, at one's club or at the dances for Boston debutantes at the Somerset, if one appeared, not too obviously drunk, in the next morning's classrooms. One must not cut too many lectures; but by a judicious selection of snap courses, by an avoidance of those that fell on Saturdays, and by the discreet and well-paid tutoring of the "Widow," one could have a really splendid time with a minimum of effort and many weekends in New York and on the North Shore. Virtue at Harvard was noticed not at all by the faculty, and was rewarded by undergraduates in the most casual fashion. At Yale, if one made the football team, or the News, or achieved the presidency of the Y.M.C.A., one might hope, as a reward, for *Skull and Bones*, and so at Yale there was the temptation to excel in scholarship, journalism, drama, athletics or religion. At Harvard the social reward for such excellence was meager and fortuitous, but one might look, on the other hand, for a deeper sincerity in the pursuit of literature or religion.

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Such being the opportunities, one would expect from an average class of six or seven hundred men perhaps a dozen who might in their professions achieve some fame; and as many as fifty who later on in life would write their own unread epitaphs in the dreary cemetery of *Who's Who in America*. My class has a number of pre-eminent names: Van Wyck Brooks, Samuel Eliot Morison, George Richards Minot, George Howe, Edward Brewster Sheldon, John Hall Wheelock, Alfred Vincent Kidder, Joseph Pulitzer, Charles Louis Seeger and Warren Delano Robbins, who died in 1935. Here are a group of men outstanding in their several professions, in literary criticism, history, medicine, architecture, drama, poetry, archæology, music, journalism and diplomacy.

With such opportunities and with this accomplishment — modest in numbers indeed — must not one impute any undergraduate failure to the student rather than to Harvard College? Yes. But *failure according to what standard* one is immediately provoked to inquire. There can of course be only one legitimate standard of success in university education. It is that *which best fits one, according to one's aptitudes, for one's chosen career in after life, in maturity*. Now herein lies my criticism of Harvard College — indeed of all American colleges — at the time of which I speak. This only legitimate standard of success was never the actual standard, accepted either by the undergraduate, the graduate or the parent body. We were judged by the general American — as slightly modified by the Harvard — standard of the day; and by this standard I should say that one half of the only important men, which the class subsequently matriculated, considered themselves college failures; and two or three of them at the most at that time were considered highly successful. I may seem to indict myself of much worse than failure, that is of snobbism. Possibly; but I don't think I am that any more. I happened to know all of these men fairly intimately as undergraduates. They then showed every promise of brilliance. Two or three of them

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told me during those years that they felt their college life a failure because they had not been elected into certain of the purely social final clubs. They felt their fathers or uncles were ashamed of them. Some doubted whether in after life they could ever live down the fact that they had made fairly good — but not the best — social clubs in college. Remember, I am not speaking of average undergraduates. I am speaking of the men who as undergraduates excelled in their own chosen fields of scholarship, writing, drama or music.

Thirty years ago the standard at Harvard was established by the socially well born; and those who were not socially well born sensed this standard. There was no insistence on wealth; but a moderate income was for most a necessary end to happiness. Many who were really poor overcame their poverty; and earned — along with success — their livelihood through college. Others supplemented their income. There were many opportunities offered. My brother Francis and I earned a good deal of money, tutoring and on the papers. We could have squeezed through without it — and pinched. There were a few men who achieved undergraduate success with neither a social background nor money. It was unusual. There were many with both social background and money who achieved no success whatsoever. That also was not uncommon. The undergraduates had their own rigid standard of — let us call it — manliness and manners, but there were too many successful and snobbish nonentities who were completely devoid of anything except their family's trust funds and a social rating. Harvard, then, was less sophomoric in its sophistication than other American colleges; and also a little less democratic in its ideals and standards than the world we live in.

At Harvard — by the measure of undergraduate and graduate prestige — college activities far outweighed scholarship; athletics outweighed undergraduate activities; social standing — the importance of club life — outweighed them all. On the other hand,

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since clubs were an end in themselves rather than a reward for virtue, there was far more genuine participation in a wide variety of interests — including scholarship — than at any other university in America.

At Harvard, then, the New England boarding-school boy went in for clubs — social success. If that were not one's line, one opted for major athletics — although even in the field of major athletics there were social overtones. Football and rowing were of course the *ne plus ultra*. About the baseball squad there was something a little — well you know. Very few Grotties went in for baseball at Harvard. The track team was quite all right and of course tennis, golf and soccer; but one hardly knew the fellows who played lacrosse or basketball; or for that matter the members of the Pierian Sodality; and never, never, never, the members of the wrestling or debating teams. They were probably Jews and one might just as well go to Columbia University.

After athletics in undergraduate prestige came the various papers. There was a certain solidarity among them but there were also nuances. The *Lampoon* crowd would be awfully hale-fellow-well-met, and a little sarcastic and conversationally very quick on the trigger with just the trifle of a drawl. The editors of the *Crimson* had more solidity and would probably attend the Law School and subsequently emerge from life's scrimmage as vice-presidents of New York insurance companies. The *Advocate* and *Monthly* were heavily dedicated to poetry and the higher criticism — a little long-haired, spiritual and baggy in the knee; but mingling with the best sort for that matter.

From a social point of view one never went in for scholarship. One carried one's honors lightly, with just a note of deprecation. High honors did not actually leave one in bad odor, so much as under a cloud of suspicion. My friend, George Minot, confided to me once that he, too, had collected lepidoptera; that he had discovered a new species, which, as I remember, was named after him. In his class history, written a quarter of a century later,

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when he had achieved the Nobel Prize in Medicine, he even recorded the fact that "My interest in science was formed in youth when I ardently collected butterflies. Apparently I was the first to note the larval stage of the butterfly *Melitæa gabbi*."

But he too occasionally found it necessary to compensate in the eyes of his clubmates for these youthful escapades in entomology. I remember a bet—made also perhaps in the pursuit of science—as to whether one could drink more champagne by imbibing a teaspoonful every four seconds or by swallowing half a pint at a gulp and then resting with closed eyes for a quarter of an hour before the succeeding swallow. I remember, too—it may well have been the same evening—when another clubmate was carried in an automobile, quite lifeless, and buried under a mound of stones, wrenched from the crumbling wall which circled Mount Auburn Cemetery.

Perhaps I am wrong in interpreting such charming memories as compensations. Perhaps I am too hard on my Alma Mater. Perhaps we were just young.

I myself had the most completely colorless and drab career, which means of course that I was not entirely unsuccessful. I was still very ambitious. I watched my neighbors. I stood in line and waited. I squeezed myself into many uncongenial molds. My Maker had not cut me out in the figure of an athlete and I found after three years of further effort that I could not much improve on his original pattern. I went out for the crew and rowed indeed all through college, but being some forty pounds underweight I only lingered a few weeks on the Freshman squad. I took a try at hockey, played on my dormitory squash-rackets team, flirted with trapshooting and finally settled down to cricket and soccer. In cricket I had a short-lived success. With the exception of a few Oxford or Cambridge postgraduates there were hardly a dozen men who knew how to play the game. To my rage the team was disbanded a week before the match with Haverford on account

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of lack of funds for traveling expenses. I had so counted on a white sweater with a red cHt! But my Junior year I did play on the soccer team, even scored a goal against Columbia; and got a red sweater with brass buttons and a black aHf. That was my final bid for the wreath of bay leaves.

I went in for every type of undergraduate activity; my second barrage to achieve a career. I was dropped from the managership of the football team and of the hockey squad. I finally made the *Crimson*. I was not to be defeated. I was in the chorus of the annual play of the *Cercle Français*. I got elected to the *Deutsche Verein*. I was provisional president of the Freshman debating society but never made the team. I was kicked off the cross-country team and made a few unsuccessful drawings for the *Lampoon*. I carried on. My torch was never extinguished; but the light it cast was pale, diffuse and wavering.

Scholarship remained as a final resource, a substitute for a more legitimate undergraduate career. I was interested in my work in a playful, superficial way. I did pretty so-so; never was brilliant. I graduated in three years with a degree *cum laude*. One year I got a Harvard College Scholarship and received in acknowledgment the usual letter of felicitation from Mr. Peabody. But what of it? I had no direction or passion in my studies. I wanted a smattering of polite learning in art, literature and languages. My own real desire was to prepare for the subsequent enjoyment of life, during vacations from law practice, with as much intelligence and culture as could be picked up without effort between soccer games, *Crimson* editorials, club dinners and "Boston" waltzes. I took one course motivated by a clear, hard intent. I had determined before I died — somehow or other — to spend three months cowpunching in Texas and riding through Mexico. Elementary Spanish was, then, in terms of realistic purpose, the most solid achievement of my three college years. I learned, actually, less Spanish than subsequently in six weeks from an outfit of semi-illiterate Mexican and Texan vaqueros.

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And lastly of course I made my clubs — really a great many of them but not the best by a long shot. One or two literary clubs — where incidentally I met almost all those of my classmates who later on amounted to anything; a couple of waiting clubs, a final club; and so on. I was elected my Junior year to a club called the O.K. The initiation fee was twenty dollars. There were two qualifications for membership. One had to be a club man and one was supposedly a convivial trencherman and drinker. The only function of the O.K. was to give one dinner a year for its sixteen members, which cost — as there were eight new neophytes and no further obligations — 160 dollars. The O.K. had many great ones inscribed on its roster, my satanic friend, Pierre de Chaignon LaRose, and Theodore Roosevelt among others. During my Senior year it was disbanded; the accredited rumor being that the ex-president had by mistake packed among his luggage its only possession — a silver tea set of debased, and heavily voluted and embossed, Victorian design — and had disappeared therewith somewhere in the Orient.

If I think, then, of my college years in terms of preparation for creative art they are a complete blank. Never would the chances of my becoming an artist seem so negligible. But even thinking of these years in terms of preparation for life, they seem irrelevant. At Groton I had been in my own eyes something of a failure and I was consequently miserable. I could not conform sufficiently — though God knows I tried — and so I remained, against my will, a rebel. But I was neither miserable nor a rebel at Harvard. I was learning to conform; and consequently life was no longer of much educational value.

Two events occurred at the end of my Sophomore year, which in retrospect outweigh the importance of all the clubs, athletics, undergraduate activities and college courses. I traveled through Europe on a bicycle and I fell in love. That trip opened up to my anæmic and conventional outlook such visions of clear happiness, such floodgates of sunshine, such stirring experi-

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ence with life as I had not encountered since my year in California.

The trip was conventional enough. On the steamer I talked art with Joe Breck and read Alphonse Daudet's *Sappho*. In my diary I recorded its closing words, which to me seemed a little less than immortal: "*Adieu, un baiser, le dernier, dans le cou . . . m'ami.*"

In Holland and Belgium, in Switzerland and then in Paris, for the first time I saw the works of the great seventeenth-century *maestri*, Rembrandt, Franz Hals, Rubens, Velasquez, el Greco; and the suave virtuosity of their forerunners, the Venetians, Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese and Giorgione. Perhaps it was not the best beginning in art. As Mary Cassatt said to me in later years, "*C'est le dernier mot.*" I think it would have been wiser to feed a while first on the primitives — the great schools of primitive design from fifth-century Greek, Coptic and Gothic to Navajo, Hopi, Mayan and Congo; and the great primitive sources of European sculpture and painting, early Greek and the Quattrocento. Perhaps, who knows? It was the seventeenth century that opened my eyes to the sensuous glory and rich tonal orchestration of oil painting.

In the Maurithuis, in The Hague, I saw Paul Potter's *Bull*, Rembrandt's *Anatomy Lesson* and Van Weyden's *Crucifixion*. I sketched in the market at Scheveningen and bought old prints of *Ada*, *Queen of Holland*, *Dirk V* and *Louise de Coligny*. I saw more Rembrandts in the Ryks Museum at Amsterdam; and bicycled and sketched through Monnickendam, Maarken, Enkhuizen, Appeldoorn and along the edge of the Zuyder Zee. At Heidelberg in Frau Professor Scherrer's pension we spent a fortnight studying German and exchanging amenities at meal-time with the one Russian, one Japanese, two Americans, three East Indians, seven French and eight German students, who constituted Frau Professor Scherrer's family and partook of her sliced sausages, boiled meat and pickled red cabbage.

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In the Black Forest it rained for a week, mist drifted lazily in the valleys and broken shreds of cloud hurried by the hilltops. There I met her; and looking at her once, felt that I was bewitched for always. She had soft brown hair that curled in crisp ringlets on her nape. Her skin was ivory white and sometimes wine-flushed. Her nose had enough mockery in its upward tilt to goad one to any extreme — to drive one crazy. Her eyes were warm and dark and a little slanted; and rippled rather than sparkled. She would glance smiling, sidewise, hovering low, “through mysterious loopholes, brilliant between the fringed lids.” Her mouth was ever parted, half-smiling like her eyes, faintly upcurling at the edges with the wanton savor of some fifth-century Etruscan goddess. I associated her face immediately with the lovely profile in the Brera at Milan, supposedly of Bianca Sforza and attributed to Leonardo.

I spent ten days there in the mystery of her presence, at Schönewald, bei Triberg, in the Black Forest. We took long walks together over carpeted paths and under dripping pines and hemlocks; up to Martinskapelle and to the tower at Brend, from which we could see in the distance the blue line of the Vosges and the Rhine Valley. In the evenings we danced the “Boston” together in the empty dreariness of the hotel dining-room. She had among her dresses an old plaid walking skirt. I felt it should have been enclosed in a shrine and presented as a reliquary to some church or museum. A week or two after I left Schönewald I received a postcard from her. On it she had scrawled in her unformed schoolgirl penmanship: “Lest we foget.” I was as enraptured by her gentle humor as I was enslaved by the wholly alluring aroma of her presence.

For two years I dreamed of her two or three times a week. I saw what I could of her during my holidays and she flirted with me gently and evasively by correspondence. I loved thus to be flirted with and I suffered accordingly. Whenever I thought of her, I felt a small pain in the pit of my stomach, something akin

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to heartburn. When someone mentioned her name in my presence, it was as if I had received a blow in the diaphragm.

During these two years I never tried to kiss her — although I was under the sorest temptation — or to hold her hand. I never told her that I loved her. I suppose I felt, with my somewhat Victorian upbringing, that until I had first made some sort of an overt declaration, any physical advance was a blemish on the perfection of our relation. Subconsciously, I realized that I was not ready for marriage. Yet I could ask for nothing less; for I was so romantically disposed that I could only envisage her in terms of absolute eternity. Consequently some two years later she married someone else — a coup de foudre on his part, too, I suppose. She could hardly continue — even in terms of eternity — to flirt with me in gentle and evasive correspondence. She must often have been puzzled by the temperance of my ardor. Even as sweet and gentle a soul must at times have been irritated by my complete abstemiousness. I felt terribly when, at the end of a long buggy ride together, she announced to me her engagement. The world was quite heavy with rain clouds. And yet I must have known — in the bottom of my heart — that I had already begun to flirt with another. But I did love her distractedly — in my own strange way — for a year or two; and — lest we forget — she was my first true love and my sweetheart.

The fusion then of these two events — my trip abroad and the first explosive eruption of romantic feeling — had a most happy effect on my development. It kept alive in me — indeed from then on there constantly grew and expanded — whatever small desire to paint lay buried in me at the time, and it made me realize how riotously happy life can be, quite apart from one's hard-earned successes as managing editor of the *Crimson*, as forward on the soccer team or as the recipient of an A.B. cum laude. Here was knowledge to shake to its foundations one's eleven years' education in New England.

Texas and Mexico

1908-1909

The cowboys and the longhorns, who partnered in '84,
Have gone to their last round-up over on the other shore.
They answered well their purpose, but their glory must fade and go;
Because men say there's a better thing at the Chicago Live Stock Show.

Texas Cowboy Ballad

I GRADUATED from Harvard by the end of my Junior year and my Senior year entered the Harvard Law School. For a variety of reasons — partly from a badly infected hand, which required several operations and probably had the effect of weakening my general physical condition, partly no doubt from some emotional maladjustment with life, from the feeling that I was a failure and would continue to be a failure in maturity, I became, at the end of a year, something of a physical and mental wreck. I had heart palpitations, spasms of fear, blinding headaches and the other symptoms of a major climacteric. Doctors advised a year's rest; and what better than a year on a ranch? I had so longed for just this occasion; ever since the rides on the beaches of the Pacific, over the West Coast sierras and among the live oaks at Gaviota. Consequently I took a year out, most of which I spent cowpunching in Texas and riding through Mexico. My mother seemed doubtful as to its permanent value. "It will be fun," she argued, "but hardly profitable later on in life." Frankly I was equally dubious as to the eventual profit to be extracted from cowpunching, but I was successful in my determination to spend a winter in the Southwest.

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I booked steerage passage from New York to New Orleans on the *Comus*, of the Southern Pacific S.S. Co. We were quartered six in a cabin and there were no sheets or mattresses on the wooden bunks. A fellow passenger, who lay immediately above me, slept in his trousers and neither washed nor shaved. Before breakfast he rolled many Bull Durham cigarettes with stiff, damp, yellowed fingers. The pouches under his oily, low-lidded eyes looked like black, rotting fruit. He had a small wet mouth like a garden slug; and his cut-away chin receded to his collarless Adam's apple. At mealtime in a low voice, throaty with hatred, he cursed the maggoty ham, rancid butter and bitter tea dregs which were served us. He told me that he was the champion Singlehand Pinochle Player of Chicago. He had had a lucrative season but thought it advisable to try his luck somewhere else for a time.

I traveled by train from New Orleans to San Antonio, through the cane brakes and wooded swamps of Louisiana. Miles and miles of tropical wilderness. Here and there a clearing, a crazy Negro hut, blue-shuttered on supporting joists; patch quilts hanging from clothes lines; African Negresses, sucking short white clay pipes; starved dogs; sleeping mules; hang-jaw Negroes. By night the country had opened and we were riding over the gently rolling, moon-flooded hills of East Texas.

For about a month I worked with the C. P. Taft outfit on the Gulf, north of Gregory. Here in Texas they single-cinched their saddles and used short manila grass ropes instead of the long rawhide California reatas. The *remuda* — the outfit — was predominantly Mexican. The whites held apart. Your Texan cowboy had all the weaknesses of the South, from which he had largely migrated; of the West, that had molded him; and of Old Mexico, which had also left its impress. He had the white supremacy cult of a Southerner and could brag about "taking a bead on a lousy, yellow greaser just to see him jump like a jack-rabbit from a cactus plant." He combined the Southerner's dislike of the Northerner with the cowboy's scorn of the tenderfoot. He was

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doubly suspicious and had a twofold inferiority. He had achieved the independence of the Westerner and had lost none of the braggadocio of the pioneer. He had deep reserves of pluck and endurance but none of the good nature of a Wyoming rancher or the manual skill and sensuous charm of a Mexican vaquero. He was largely illiterate and had sometimes a shooting record. He spoke Spanish as fluently as English and was excessively proud and loyal — in a deprecatory, lacrimose sort of way — to the Lone Star State. All too frequently he would refer to “us Texaners and you Americans.”

It was the good life. We breakfasted at four o'clock in the morning on goat ribs, mutton steaks, hominy or meal cakes, and tins of black coffee. The Mexicans would add a handful of chile peppers to give it tang. The men crouched about the mesquite coals, sitting on one heel, smoking corn-shuck cigarettes; or stood with their backs to the fire, their fingers stretched out to the warmth of the flames. Sometimes we were ten or twelve or fourteen hours in the saddle. It would be darkening as we reached the chuck-wagon. At that hour the jack-rabbits, curious, would approach the camp. They stood up, tall on the flat horizon; their ears perpendicular above some cactus plant, their noses in the wind. I found them good eating but the cowboys would not touch them. They said their loins were full of worms. The coyotes sang out their evening wail. At night they would smell their way into the camp and filch a quarter of goat, if it hung too low from a branch of mesquite.

The round-ups — branding, cutting, separating, herding and driving — were over in November. I was offered a job at eighteen dollars a month on Las Catarinas ranch at Encinal, about three hundred miles north of Gregory. I made the trip in easy stages, packing my blankets, slicker and few belongings behind the cantle of my saddle; and making about forty miles a day.

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Texan ranchmen were hospitable. If there were no spare bed, I was given a shake-down in the barn. I paid for my mare's oats but never for my own board or lodging. There were no roads and the ranches were far apart. It was all cow country then. Cotton had not come to the Rio Grande. Occasionally near the railroads or on the outskirts of the cattle towns one ran across the tin-can, soap-box huts of the squatters down from Missouri or Kansas, with their covered wagons, dogs, babies and potato patches, but elsewhere no plow had ever turned a furrow. There were wire fences, but sometimes one might herd cattle for a week in one pasture and never see a fence. The beautiful scissor-birds with their long forked tails and salmon-colored breasts flickered in and out of the bushes, and the silly chaparral cocks with their great crests and long sweep of tail ran along the trail in front of me, sputtering and scolding. Quail drummed through the low nopal cactus and the cardinal birds looked never so bright as against the dust gray-green of the mesquite. An armadillo waddled into the bushes before I could pull my Winchester from the scabbard.

One night I spent at Jim Murray's ranch which lay a few miles out of Oakville. We supped and breakfasted on shoulder of pig, cold biscuits and unsweetened black coffee. Jim lived alone with a pet deer and was glad to talk to someone. He had come out from Ireland in '55. His father and mother had died in New Orleans; and he was "given to a man called King," who brought him to Texas. He had fought the Comanches and his wrist had been broken by a Comanche arrow. "They come down after ponies on the full moon," said Jim, pouring out a panful of coffee for his deer. "They ride abreast of one another, not in file. On the long drives up to Oklahoma they will slip into the herds and stampede the steer. They carry their quivers over the left shoulder and shoot well at a hundred yards. Their arrows will cut flesh at a hundred fifty. On wet days the bow-strings stretch and their shooting is less effective. Inside a house







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you can face fifty of them. They're like coyotes. They're only dangerous if you lose your head. I've killed Comanches; plenty of 'em." He continued to speak throughout the evening in the present tense but admitted that the last he'd "seed on 'em was in '73."

Next night I stopped at Tilden, the county seat of McMullen. It was fifty miles to the nearest railroad, had five hundred inhabitants, a courthouse, a jail, four stores, eight saloons, six churches and a cemetery. In Texas a cemetery was a sign of age rather than of respectability. Like all Texan towns Tilden had been planned much as if its hundred wooden shacks, sheds, lean-tos, outhouses, churches, bars, privies, stores and cemetery had been dropped from the sky and left facing just as they landed. There was a great stir in Tilden that night. A preacher was over from Pearsall, preaching all day and in the evenings, converting the heathen. Upon inquiry I found that dancing was heathen, rather than drinking, cursing or shooting. I slept in the "dollar hotel." The price of a room and of each meal was two bits. Towels were extra.

One night I spent with a family called Ratcliffe at San Roque. Mrs. Ratcliffe had gentle brown eyes, a soft Southern drawl, and kept up an endless and rambling monologue as she pattered about the one-roomed cabin in stockingless, slippered feet. She fed me on the hindquarter of a wild *jabalí* boar, fresh bread, rice, honey and coffee and cream. I had not eaten all day.

The Ratcliffe children, Jesse, Louis, Jode and little Tom, sat on a bench against the wall, staring at me in silence. The elder boy, Jesse, was eighteen but had the shrunken face of a man of thirty. His eyes were close, watery and without luster. His white skin was almost blotted out with gray freckles. His cheeks were flat and his lips were pale and cracked. There were dark, moist passages under his pink lids. His red hair was parted on one side and fell almost to his shoulders. He stared at me furtively for some time and then asked me in a creaky voice whether

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Oklahoma were on the other side of California. When I had satisfied his curiosity he lapsed into an opaque silence.

Mrs. Ratcliffe wandered about the room urging me to eat. Ten-year-old Jode asked me for some Bull Durham. They all smoked, said Mrs. Ratcliffe, even three-year-old Tom. Once he had chewed a quid for an hour "just like a li'le ol' man." Her father wanted her to chew, too, as it preserved the teeth. She had tried, indeed, but it always made her ill. Jesse spoke up and said chewing was unhealthy as it made you spit up a lot of what ought to stay inside you; but smoking was all right as you only spat up what ought to come out.

I asked Mrs. Ratcliffe if she had borne other children. Yes; three of them had died on her. "But you caint expect to raise 'em all," she added apologetically.

Mr. Ratcliffe came in. He had been out all day fence-riding. He was a whale of a man with gentle, resigned eyes under his black brows. Over his blue flannel shirt he wore the short brown cowboy jacket with corduroy collar and sleevebands; and cured leather chaparejos over his blue overalls. He nodded to me silently, laid his hammer, wire-clippers and fringed gauntlets on the table, and removed his Cheyenne spurs from his short, high-heeled boots. His wife addressed him as "Mr. Ratcliffe" and the boys called him "Sir." Jesse brought him a basin of soap and water. One felt that the Ratcliffes were Southern gentry.

That was the end of my journey. Next day I rode into Las Catarinas. It took me six days to make the trip from Gregory, on the Gulf, through Sinton, Beeville, Oakville, Tilden and Cotulla to Catarina. Today there are roads and I fancy one could do it in as many hours. But it's thin country and it probably has not changed much. Tilden, the county seat of McMullen, on the Rio Frio, still has a population of five hundred. Perhaps the cattle country hasn't gone over yet to cotton and truck farming. I hope not. It could never be as beautiful as the flat, waterless

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desert that I knew, that waste of sand and parched arroyos; of gray mesquite and twisting chaparral; of dust-covered nopal, cocanopal and towering cardón cactus; of lonely ranches; and groups of moody longhorn, knee-deep in the mud of some dried-out water hole, or sleeping under the shadow of the dusty silver gray-green Texas sycamores.

I worked for a couple of months with the Catarina outfit. We slept in the open and the chuck-wagon carried our bedding. The nights were cold and the men doubled up, two in a blanket. We wrapped our boots in our canvas jackets and used them as pillows. We were up early and as we rarely had a noonday meal we supped at four o'clock when we got back from the round-ups. Morning and evening we ate goat's meat, potatoes, frijoles and black coffee. Sometimes we had as a dessert fried flour, sweetened with sugar and raisins — poor man's pudding, the boys called it. After supper and before night settled down we played games, jumping, running and wrestling. I got the boys to sing their ballads in English or Spanish, "Hell in Texas," "The Passing of the Longhorn," "The Midnight Stampede," "*La Recién Casada*" and others. I achieved a certain success myself by translating into doggerel Spanish a song which in my time had had its day of popularity among the Harvard undergraduates: "No balls at all" rang the challenge of the provocative, though somewhat repetitious, chorus.

The autumn round-ups were over on the Rio Grande. I said good-by to my friends at Las Catarinas, rode down to Laredo, where I sold my horse for forty dollars, and crossed the border into Mexico. Seventeenth-century Spain and frontier America mingled. Neither had left too strong an imprint on the Mexican. He remained what he had always been — an Indian. In the store windows were Siegel-Cooper overcoats at ten dollars, advertisements of Singer sewing machines, Winchester rifles and Stetson

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hats. At street corners, in front of iron-grilled windows, silent eyes looked out from the encircling sarape. Old women heated tamales over coals and sold warm tortillas, wrapped in dirty rags.

The next day the train rattled through the cactus-covered flats of Nuevo Leon and Coahuila. At the stations girls were offering *carne de chivo*, *queso de vaca* and *enchiladas*. About their heads and faces they wrapped the black Spanish mantilla, or the brown, or blue-black, narrow Indian *rebozo*. The *sombreros* of the *vaqueros* were wide and heavy; they carried machetes, slung below the knee; their saddle leather was of uncured buff rawhide; the cantles high; and the pummels, the girth of a man's leg. We left the dusty gray-green yellow flats and ran straight into the mountains, that had trembled all morning on the horizon. They were cut out of blue, blue-black, green-brown cardboard. It was a wonder world of fantasy.

Monterrey was a hollow between two mountains, the Cerro de Mitres and the Cerro de Silla. I had not had a bath for two months and was tired from thirty-six hours spent on the wooden bench of a third-class Mexican coach. I dropped my saddle and blankets at a *fonda* and took a trolley for the municipal baths.

On the way out I picked up a friendly little American, a Mr. Stuart. He could hardly believe it when I told him I had lived at Ardmore. "Bless your soul, what school did you attend? The High?" And when I told him it was Haverford: "Why I can't believe it. I was there two years myself. It would have been before your day. Who did you know there? We must have friends in common." It turned out we had many friends in common; and before we got to the baths I had told him about my trip and just how much money I had with me, saved up from college for the great adventure. He was a charming little fellow, somewhat vulgar, just a trifle voluble; but very friendly in a strange land. After the baths we had a beer together. At the table next us sat an old man, playing *solitaire*. He had gray hair, a mouth like a crack in a cement wall and long, flickering, blue-veined

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hands. He wore loose, black clothes; a black sombrero; and had green spectacles on his long narrow beak.

"Why, bless my soul," said Mr. Stuart, "if that isn't the first American deck I've laid eyes on in four months' time! You don't see honest-to-God cards often in Monterrey; or honest-to-God Americans, for that matter." He hailed the stranger to our table and we had another beer together. Mr. Stuart suggested we all three join in a game of Colorado poker and the winner to pay another round. I said: "No thanks; I don't play but I'd like to sit and watch." They played a while; Mr. Stuart was winning. He shoved me a handful of chips and said: "You play, too; it's just for beer anyway." I played for about twenty minutes and there was nothing to it and I won about six bits myself. I didn't bet high because I was cautious and there were no cards to bet on. The highest I had was a pair of Jacks.

Then my luck turned for the better. Mr. Burns, the green-spectacled stranger, was dealing. The first card he dealt me — face down — was an ace. I drew another ace and Mr. Burns a king. He bet fifteen dollars. I thought he must have two kings but I had two aces. I wasn't going to drop out for fifteen dollars. On the third round Mr. Burns dealt me a Jack and himself an eight. Stuart had fallen out by this time. Mr. Burns bet fifty dollars. I knew, now, that he was tough; but I knew that I could beat the best he had on the three cards dealt. I put my money on the table. Mr. Burns dealt me a Jack and himself a five spot. He bet a hundred dollars. I had aces over Jacks. Mr. Burns's strongest cards would have been a pair of kings. He didn't know I had two aces. There was three hundred and thirty-six dollars on the table. I had never played cards in my life, but I knew something about the mathematical law of chance. I kept my head on my shoulders and did some quick thinking. I wouldn't let the old bastard string me for a sucker and bluff me out of three hundred dollars. I put my money on the table. Mr. Burns dealt us each a five spot.

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All along I figured he had the other king covered. He would have kings over fives to my aces over Jacks. There was one chance in fifty-two that he had three fives. But would any damn fool have bet seventy-five dollars — on his third hand — on a five, an eight and a king? Mr. Burns bet five hundred.

I was pretty mad. I got up and said I thought things looked crooked. I didn't have that much money with me. They had started playing for a round of beer and now there was over eight hundred on the table. I said I didn't like it and put my hand on my pistol holster.

Mr. Burns didn't say anything through his green spectacles. My friend Mr. Stuart became very angry and excited. He said he didn't like the looks of things a bit. He wasn't playing that hand but he thought things looked crooked. He said he didn't know anything about Mr. Burns. He was going to stick by me. He said:

"Have you got the cards?"

I said: "Sure I've got the cards. But I haven't got seven hundred dollars. It looks to me crooked." I eyed the green spectacles with my hand on my pistol holster.

My friend Mr. Stuart said: "I'll stake you half. Have you got the cards? Will you do it?"

"Sure I have the cards," I said. "But I don't like the way he's playing." I knew I had the cards and I was getting pretty mad.

Mr. Burns got up. He said: "Gentlemen, we started out in a friendly game. The betting's got a bit high. I propose we call the whole thing off for a magnum of champagne."

I hesitated a split second. My friend Mr. Stuart had worked himself into a fury. He was frothing at the mouth. He roared:

"No, damn it! It's your bet. You stay by it." He reached over and whipped Mr. Burns's card face up. It was the fourth five spot.

We paid up. I put 418 dollars on the green baize table. Mr. Burns offered us an *aguardiente* and shook hands before we left.

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Outside Mr. Stuart said he felt ill and went round the corner to vomit. On the way back to Monterrey he asked me if he could loan me some money, "just to tide things over." I said: "Never mind." I had about ten dollars left and my ticket to Durango. He gave me his hotel address and pumped my hand when we parted. Next day I went to his hotel. No; there had never been a Mr. Stuart stopping there; or anyone answering his description!

I lingered almost a month at Durango, trying to explain by correspondence to my mother in the most dignified way what had happened. I had no money to stop at a hotel and I put up with a photographer, Jerry O'Shea — on credit. My host was then a man of sixty. At thirteen he had run away from home in Philadelphia and had roamed the world ever since. He had been for two years in the Transvaal in the mounted police, had traded in Ecuador, prospected for gold in Peru, sold real estate in Florida. He had reached Torreon, beaten; an old man with a dollar, Mex, in his pocket. His first night there he won the hand of Guadalupe Duhalde, the rich widow of a Sonora ranchero. Together they set up a photographer's studio in Durango, where they prospered. I slept in the patio, back of the studio, with four white rabbits, a dove, three hens, a Mexican hairless, two lovebirds and an ancient and splenetic parrot, Augustin de Iturbide.

All day long I wandered through the streets of Durango. The buildings were gay with color, pink, blue or white; and the various stores had the most fanciful of names painted in bright letters: *Flor de Amor*, *Playa de Palestina*, *Montaña de la Suiza*, *Fuente de Araba*. I went to a bull fight and saw the great Spanish espada, Relampaguito, kill four bulls. It was pretty bad with the horses. Their ears were laced up and their off eye blindfolded so they could not see the bull. The picadors jerked the horses up and lifted them on to the bull's horns. Again and again they were dragged to their feet and thrown against the maddened bulls. Sometimes they caught their feet in their own entrails. If

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they were too weak to get up they lay in their blood until the fun was over, when they were dragged out by the feet at a gallop by four cream-colored, caparisoned mules. The crowds shrieked, whistled and cheered. It was a good fight. Relampaguito had seldom demonstrated a greater suavity of sword play.

All the time I was in Durango I never met a soul except Jerry O'Shea and Guadalupe. In the evenings I strolled about the Plaza. The caballeros walked in one direction and the girls and their duennas in the other. The band played "*De Terreon á Lerdo.*" I felt terribly lonely. Moody and exotic desires prayed on me. I dreamed of settling down in this lovely mountain town. I would raise cattle; and marry a Durangonese, proud of carriage, with low forehead and slant Mongolian eyes.

Jerry O'Shea, seeing that I was lonely, asked me why I never went to a *casa pública*. He said: "Once in a while it does a fellow good to get a bellyful of hot guts." Throughout his adventures Jerry had remained a realist; devoid of sentiment and poetic feeling.

Sometimes in the evenings Doña Lupe sang to the accompaniment of her guitar. Her voice was thin but it pulled my heart-strings. She would say: "Ay! Ay! Ay! Don Jorge, life was beautiful when I was young. Life was better in Sonora, on the cattle ranchos. The cardón cacti were forty feet high and the Yaqui carried bows and arrows and wore their hair long, with a red fillet fastened about their foreheads. You should have seen the *jinetes*, riding in from the flat *llanos* with silver spurs and silver bits and gold braid on their sombreros. We watched the vaqueros rope the yearlings at the spring round-ups. We danced all night in the patio of the ranchhouse. Ay! *Válgame Dios!* Don Jorge, it was beautiful."

Her eyes were watery but they had been blue. Her hair was nearly white; it had strands of gold in it. She seemed more French than Mexican with all the delicate raillery, the sweetness and gentleness of French women. When she picked up her guitar

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and sang, she was far away in the golden heat and youth of Sonora and Baja California:

*“Adiós! Adiós!
Quien sabe si en la vida
Ya nunca mas
A verte volveré?”*

There was another pretty little song of hers, a dialogue between a boy and a schoolgirl. He tells her how sad he will be if she will not sing and dance for him, and she refuses because it will put her to shame. At length he threatens her that he will leave her and go to Cosalá; and she, almost consenting, asks whether he will not consider her too bold.

“But wherein lay the sting, Doña Lupe, of his threatened journey to Cosalá?”

“Ay! Don Jorge,” she smiled at me. “All the prettiest girls in Mexico come from Cosalá. No wonder we others were jealous. You know the adage:

*Cosalá es cosa linda
Con sus lindas Cosalindas.

Cosalá’s a pretty findin’
With a comely Cosalinden.”*

She took up her guitar and sang:

*“Cantame, niña, ’sta danza!
Cantala por carida’!
Mira! si no me la cantas,
Me voy pará Cosalá.”*

HE: By the schoolhouse door, child,
Sunday morn, a week ago,
I watched you dance and sing, child.
Don’t wag your head. It’s so, you know.

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The verses were so quaint, child;
The steps so light and fair;
They are graven in my heart, child;
The dance, your voice, the air.

Sing me those verses, Panchita,
Dance to me for charity!
You have no idea, if you don't, dear,
How desperate I shall be.

SHE: I know you're mistaken, sir.
I never could dance; I could never sing.
And if I should, you would take me, sir,
For a bold-faced little thing.

HE: Dance me those steps, fair Panchita.
Sing for me, *por carida'*!
Look you, next Monday, I'm going
Up yonder to Cosalá.

SHE: I believe you're mistaken, sir.
I never could dance, I rarely sing.
And — if I should — would you take me, sir,
For a shame-faced little thing?

Doña Guadalupe's parrot was named after the great Mexican patriot, liberator, soldier and emperor who was miserably shot in 1824. He had a black tongue, evil red eyes, an irascible temper and, generally speaking, a very military disposition. He chewed tobacco and swallowed the quid. At five o'clock every morning he would clear his throat — it sounded like distant artillery practice — and shout:

“Doña Lupe, Doña Lupe!”

“Mande usted?” screamed back Mrs. O'Shea. [What do you want?]

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"*Toque la corneta*" [Play us the cornet], bellowed Iturbide.

"*Tocala tu*" [Play it yourself], shrilled Guadalupe.

Iturbide would once more clear his throat and then proceed to play every tap and reveille in his repertoire. *Toc Toc Toc Tocala tu. Toc Toc Toc Tocala tu.* It went on until, hours later, she brought him his breakfast.

Whenever I went by Iturbide's post, to which he was fastened by a silver chain, he would open his black mouth and roll his eyes at me in a concentration of hatred. I would fill my cheeks with tobacco smoke and blow a full cloud into his evil face. He would open and close his mouth and eyes several times and glare at me in apoplectic silence. A few days before I left Durango, I blew a final puff of smoke into the General's face. Whether it was old age, high blood pressure or acute indigestion I cannot tell. He slowly rolled up the whites of his eyes, opened and closed his black mouth, loosened the grip on his perch and slid — quite dead — the length of his silver chain.

Doña Guadalupe was at first disconsolate. To mitigate her sorrow I suggested to her that no dish was as savory as a ragout of parrot. She winced a little at the thought of eating the General. Curiosity, rather than thrift, got the better of her; she served him up next evening *à la cacciatore*, with many olives, tomatoes, green peppers and hot chile sauce. His muscles were hard and tasteless and had the consistency of an automobile tire. Poor Iturbide! I am told that parrots live to a great age. I have often speculated whether he actually saw military service with the Emperor, during his campaigns with the Yaqui Indians through the hot plains of Sonora.

A few weeks later I set out over the sierras with Juan Santana, an *ex-arriero* — muleteer — and Indian from the high tablelands of Chihuahua. He wore tight-fitting green corduroys, pleated down the sides and spreading at the instep; a short Mexican jacket, trimmed with brown lace, and a straw sombrero, fash-

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ioned for six reales by the convicts of San Luis Potosí. He was shod in leather sandals — *huaraches* — and carried a three-foot machete under his stirrup-leather. Both of us rode armed, as there were bandits in the sierras. We packed flour, dried fruit, rice, tea, coffee and wolf traps on a mule. We traveled light and hunted along the way.

Juan was a storyteller. At night, over the fire of *jocote* logs, he would narrate adventures which he had experienced with lion, mountain wolf, bandit or other pest: —

“It was at Duraznito that the *malditos* [the cursed ones, the bandits] killed my father in bed with me. My father was *caporal* [overseer] at the Pino Blanco Rancho, two days’ ride from Duraznito. He was a heavy man with a square gray beard, a *trigueño* [dark-skinned] like my poor brother Adeleido. Monthly he rode to Duraznito to collect his pay. Well, good now. It is Ash Wednesday and the inns are crowded. You have not seen Ash Wednesday, Don Jorge — *la Fiesta de Ceniza*? The old women and the girls will paint a cross on their forehead and in the evening the girls walk to the *Plaza de Armas* with flowers; and the men throw confetti. There are bulls and music in the Plaza, although it is not Sunday. It is very gay and there are many young *rancheros* in from the country. In the evening they drink pulque. In the marketplace the old women sell *enchiladas* and *chile con carne*. And what dancing! *Ay! Válgame Dios!* I was quite drunk — *crudito* — with mescal and pulque. My father and I slept together in the same bed in a small inn in the suburbs. The inns and the stables were all full. My father came back late and hammered on the door a long while before I heard him. It was icy cold, February. I let him in and he slipped off his sandals and flung his *sarape* over the bed. He climbed into bed. We lay back to back, I next the wall; and for a while I slept heavily.”

Juan Santana stooped. He picked a coal with his thumb and forefinger from the embers and lit his *changa*. His small red eyes were shining. He straightened himself, removed his *sombrero*

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and passed the back of his hand over his forehead. His hair was straight, long and black. It grew down low over his forehead. The crown of his head was high and flat. Juan Santana filled his lungs twice with a deep intake from his *changa*. He looked at me intently with his gray red eyes. He opened and spread the fingers of his left hand, palm down.

“When I woke up there were three men in the room. They had come for my father’s money; but they had not noticed me, because I slept next the wall. One of them stabbed my father in the ribs with his knife. Well now, good. Another of the *malditos* carried a machete. I jumped from the bed right onto his back and the machete dropped from his hand. At the noise the other two were frightened and ran. I stopped and picked up the machete. Then I turned and recognized my attacker as the innkeeper. He seized me by the waist and we stumbled against the head of the cot together. I would have killed the innkeeper with his machete. Now his wife, who was a fat woman and strong, ran in; and while I wrestled with the innkeeper, she tore the machete from me and she cut me over the knuckle — so. They got away — the two *malditos*, the innkeeper and his wife. But they killed my father. He was no louse of a man like me. He was as big as a Texan. When I was little he would take me riding with him, to visit the bear traps which he set about the ranch. He made me ride the yearling calves, sitting on their rump, holding the tail over my thigh. He wanted to make a *jinete* [a horseman] out of me. But I wanted to be an *arriero* [a muleteer].”

Ayl It was a gay life, that of the *arriero*. I tell you it was something to live for to hear a caravan of burros and muleteers coming down a mountain trail. High up among the pines one could hear the “*Hay, haya, burro! vamonos, hombre! v-a-m-o-n-o-s!*” of the drivers. In a twist of the path out would swing the leader, his long ears nodding in time to each step, his body swaying rhythmically from side to side. Little mouse-colored burros with black stripes down their backs and shoulders; tiny burritos, trot-

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ting by their mothers' tails; long-haired mountain mules, white, dun and sorrel; and shiny, smooth-skinned mules from the coast; and the arrieros, their shoulders and faces swathed in red and white and blue sarapes, their black Mongolian eyes peering out under wide sombreros.

"Adiós, amigo!" sings the arriero as he stumbles by.

"De donde vienes? [Whence do you hail?]" Juan calls.

"From Guadalupe de los Reyes with oranges," in a rising crescendo.

"And Trinity, the mother of Sorrow? Is she better?"

"Dead," screams the arriero, now hidden in the pines. "She slept with a hairless dog to cure her rheumatism, but it ran away in the night and she was dead a week later. *Ora! Ora! Burro! Busqueda, maldito!* [Make haste you brigand]"

"Ay! Pity me God!" soliloquizes Juan Santana. "It is that which is bound to be! [*Es lo que ha de ser*]"

We made the coast in three weeks in easy stages, hunting and trapping a bit along the way. In the high sierras it was pine timberland. The burro trails were bitten deep into the rock, where for hundreds of years thousands of precise little feet had deftly picked their way. We camped under crisp, metallic stars, our feet to the jocote embers. From the arroyos the lobos howled like derailed locomotives. In the morning we broke the ice from the necks of our canteens. At an adobe ranchhouse at El Salto, the watershed between the Gulf and the Pacific, we bought a round of goat's cheese, a dozen cold tortillas and jerked pork cured with chile — *carne adobada*. From El Banco at daybreak we could see range upon range of multicolored mountains; orange, red-ochre, gray-green, gray-brown and black. In the distance over the blue foothills shimmered the plains, melting and merging still further into the mirror of the sea. And from this shimmering transparency, that was either sea or sky, rose two faint blue clouds or islands — Los Lobos — that watched the

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Harbor of Mazatlan, 130 miles away in the Gulf of California.

We dropped like a plummet from the timberland and tall pine forests into the dry river beds of Rio Chico and the *tierra caliente*. Until very recently Rio Chico had paid its tribute to six bandits who infested the mountain passes. Their leader was a boy named Julio. He was a *mestizo* — half Yaqui on his mother's side. He was a good boy and a hard worker, but he lost his job; he was hungry and he stole a chicken. He was caught in the act; hot words were used. The owner of the chicken drew a knife and Julio shot him. Then he fled to the mountains; he was an outlaw. Others joined him; highwaymen from Zacatecas and an escaped convict from Tepic. There were six of them in all. They held up travelers in the mountain passes and took their toll in slaughtered steer from the rancheros. A troop of *rurales* — the mountain police — had been sent by the federal Government to mop them up. In a month of skirmishing and sharpshooting about the steep escarpments of the valley, three of the bandits had been killed and six of the *rurales*. Ay! Julio was *hombre valoroso*, a real bandit!

Then three Indians from Rio Chico volunteered to get him. They took with them rifles, tortillas and a jug of mescal. They came upon the *malditos* high up in a cleft of the mountains, feasting on a slaughtered steer. The Indians told a story of an altercation and the shooting of a muleteer at a coast-town *mesón*. They sat with the bandits all night, drinking mescal and eating meat with them. Two of the bandits drank heavily and slept; and the Indians, too, feigned a drunken slumber. Julio, the *mestizo*, sat and watched the others from the corner of his small shoe-button eyes, his rifle across his knees. All night he watched them, sullen and suspicious. Toward morning his chin nodded on his white sarape. A bullet whipped his chest and he fell forward on his face coughing blood. His back was broken and he was paralyzed. But he retained consciousness and watched them shoot his two friends in their drunken slumber. Then they cut

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his throat from ear to ear. They dragged the three bodies down to Rio Chico and strung them up by the heels, Julio in the middle.

"I saw his head," said Juan Santana. "His hair was bushy and a foot long. His lips were wide and thick and his eyes small. His tongue was hanging out and he was slit from ear to ear. *Chinga'o!* What a man! But our Indians did by cunning what the Governor of Durango could not do with all his *rurales*. *Pum! Pum! Pum!* And after that there were no brigands in the mountains of Rio Chico."

We stopped off and rested for a day or two at Mazatlan. It was a coastal town with its black and white chequered cathedral, a chop-house, a theater, an adobe jail and many gaily colored bars. The Mexican Central Railroad had not yet been extended through to Mazatlan, but engineers were busy in the neighboring hills, surveying and mapping out the gradings. The town was overrun with the flotsam and jetsam of humanity, drunken, fighting, shooting miners and construction men. In the bars and brothels sailors, surveyors and pick-and-shovel boys fought over their mescal or panhandled a *real* from strangers for a half tumbler of *aguardiente*.

Juan Santana was visiting a cousin and I wandered, a little lonely, about the cobbled streets. The *cantinas* were gay with color and their names provocative: *La Parisiense*, *La Esmeralda*, *Puerta del Sol*. One — perhaps in irony, perhaps in a gesture of atonement was called *Al Pie de La Cruz* — At the Foot of the Cross. I entered, ordered a drink and fell into conversation with a pretty little barefooted Indian girl. Her breasts were high and firm under her clean white dress. Her long oiled hair was tightly bound in a blue ribbon about her forehead. Her eyes were lustrous and dark; her full lips like two lovely unfolding petals.

"And how is it here in Mazatlan? It is a fine pueblo? It is gay [*muy alegre*]?"





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"Ay, ay, ay! señorito, it's a sad town, Mazatlan. Here only money counts. All one sees are Americans. Poor, drunken, abandoned creatures. Here the mothers will not permit their daughters to go to dances unless they are affianced. All is for money. No one holds a girl in respect. And the Americans are lost to all decency."

I said: "Might I take the señorita to the theater? They are playing 'El Angel del Cielo.' "

"Ay! Ay! Ay! De veras! Truly in Mazatlan the theater is dreary beyond tears." She looked at me with her soft brown eyes and lowered the velvet fringe of her lashes. "And what will the señorito be," she asked, "a Frenchman?"

I said: "Soy americano."

"Ah!" she said with an intake of finality.

"So you don't like Gringos?"

She said, "Pues, no [Well, no.]"

"And how many have you met?"

"Pues, dos [Well, two]."

"And where do you come from?" I said. Her whole face lit up with a through-shine glow of pride and love.

"Ay, señorito, I come from Cosalá."

At Mazatlan I put up at a typical coastal *mesón*, or inn. The horses were corralled in an open patio. About the patio ran a covered portico, on which opened narrow cubicles. Iron-grilled slits of windows gave from these cubicles to the street; heavy, iron-studded doors opened to the patio and inner court. We locked our saddles and belongings in the rooms and slept on trestle tables under the portico with the horses. I asked the *mesonero* what was of interest in Mazatlan. He told me by all means to visit the jail, one of the finest on the Gulf of California.

I was admitted to the jail without having to show credentials. The guards wore *huaraches* — sandals; their white cotton trousers were drawn with a string tight about the ankles; and their shirts

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were looped low about their hips. They had double bandeliers of cartridges and carried fixed bayonets in their rifles. When I came in they were playing cards with some prisoners but got up and saluted me. The prison had a wide, clay-floored patio. Wistaria drooped from the high adobe walls. There were pots of yellow and black croton, purple poinsettia and white oleander about the yard. Dripping water jars stood in the cool shadow of a patch of bamboos. A royal poinciana hung its scarlet clusters over the prison wall.

The lieutenant asked me if I should care to visit the *americano*. He was *muy bravo y feo* — tough and ugly — and confined to close quarters. He beckoned a couple of guards to accompany me with fixed bayonets. There was much rattling of chains and unbolting of heavy, iron-studded doors. When I stepped into the cell I could not see. The light trickled down from a high and narrow crevice. The floor was of clay with a bundle of straw in one corner. The American lay on the straw; a chain was fastened to a ring about his ankle. His skin was neither white nor yellow; yet it was a transparent parchment of a sort, lit up by some pale inner glow of unhealthy vermilion. His forehead was wet. No doubt he had fever. There was a look of poised, calculated and inhuman evil that emanated from his pale blue-green eyes from under the heavy red eyebrows and red shock of hair. He gazed at me steadily in the twilight of the narrow cell, with eyes that were the eyes of a cat or a serpent or a turtle. I asked if there were anything I could do for him. He said in a very measured, lifeless voice, "Yes. Speak to the *jefe político*. Better speak to the Governor at Culiacan. I have been here for two years. I haven't long to live. I'm dying — dying of the bloody flux."

I promised him. Later I kept my promise. But I wanted to get out into the air. I asked if there were anything else I could do. He looked at me, taking my measure, with his blue-green serpent's eyes, and said: "Yes, get them to bring me some water." I knew he was dying — of the bloody flux.